



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

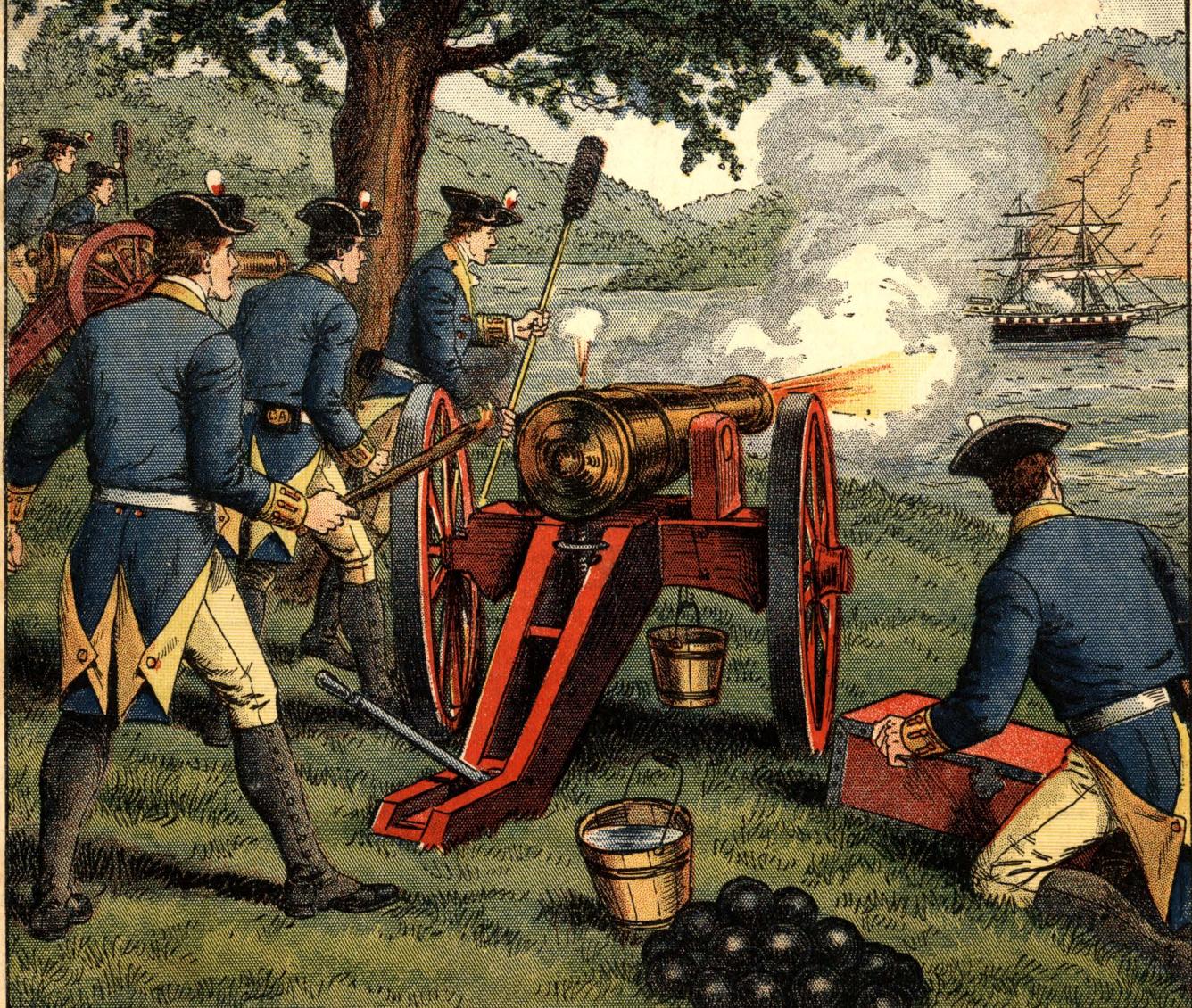
No. 162.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 5, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS AT WEST POINT; OR, HELPING TO WATCH THE REDCOATS.

By HARRY MOORE.



Dick sighted the gun, and then held the match to the touch-hole. "Boom!" went the cannon, and a yardarm was severed by the ball and fell to the deck of the ship with a crash, knocking down several of the redcoats.

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 5, 1904.

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The Liberty Boys at West Point

OR,

Helping to Watch the Redcoats.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

CHAPTER I.

WATCHING AND FISHING.

"Say, Dick!"

"Well, Bob?"

"What is the matter with General Arnold?"

"I don't know. I didn't know there was anything the matter with him."

"I'm sure there is."

"What makes you think so?"

"His actions."

It was the 15th of September, of the year 1780.

Two handsome youths nineteen years of age were standing on the shore of the Hudson river at a point not far from West Point, and were engaged in the pleasing work, or pastime, of fishing.

The two were Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook.

Dick and Bob were members of a company of youths who were known far and wide as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

Dick was the captain of the company, and as the company was famous for the bravery of its members on the field of battle, so was Dick himself famous as a scout and spy.

He had done a great deal of daring and dangerous work for General Washington, and he was always ready to do more.

A week before the day on which we introduce them to the reader's notice Dick and his Liberty Boys had been sent up to West Point by General Washington to help Arnold watch the redcoats.

It was feared that the British might come up the river

with a strong fleet of vessels at almost any time, and it was desired to have advance information, in case such a move was made.

In order to secure this advance information it was necessary to have some good spies and scouts to do the work, and this was why Dick and his Liberty Boys had been sent there.

Dick and Bob were now engaged in watching for the coming of the British fleet, and fishing at the same time.

Bob had just taken a good sized fish off his hook when he addressed Dick as given at the head of this chapter.

"How does Arnold act that you should think there is something the matter with him?" asked Dick.

"Well, he seems to be restless and uneasy."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"I haven't noticed it."

"I have."

"In what way does he *act*, that makes you think he is uneasy?"

"He walks back and forth on the level ground back of the fort so much, with his hands clasped behind his back, his head down and his eyes on the ground."

"I haven't noticed him, Bob."

"Well, I have, and it looks to me as though he was troubled about something."

"Perhaps he is afraid that the British may come up the river and capture the fort."

"Perhaps so; though I don't see that the danger of that happening is imminent enough to make such an old warrior as Arnold look troubled."

"I wouldn't think so."

At this moment an orderly appeared, and said:

"General Arnold wishes to see you at headquarters, Captain Slater."

"All right. Tell him I will be there right away—ha, I've got a splendid bite."

A fish had seized the hook just as Dick was speaking, and presently the youth landed a beauty, a fish that weighed at least three pounds.

"You can take him off the hook, Bob," said Dick. "I've got to go."

"All right, Dick."

Dick turned and walked up the hill, and was soon at headquarters.

General Arnold gave Dick a pleasant greeting, which the youth returned in kind.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said.

"Yes, Dick," was the reply. "I have some work for you to do."

"I shall be glad to do it, sir."

Arnold stepped to his desk and drew a letter forth from a pigeonhole.

"Here is a letter," he said. "I wish you to take it to North Castle and deliver it to Mr. Samuel Fosdick, who lives there."

"Very well, sir."

Dick took the letter and placed it in his coat pocket.

"Shall I start at once?" he asked.

"At once, Dick; I wish the letter delivered at the earliest possible moment."

"Very well."

Dick saluted and withdrew.

He left the fort and made his way down to the river. Bob was still there fishing.

"Hello! Back to fish some more, Dick?" he greeted. Dick shook his head.

"No; I have some work to do, Bob."

"Eh? What kind of work?"

"I am to go across the river and to North Castle."

"What for?"

"To carry a letter to a man who lives there."

"Say, Dick!"

"Well?"

"You had better let me go along."

"Why so?"

"Because it is dangerous for you to go through that part of the country alone."

"What is the danger?"

"From cowboys and skinners."

Dick looked thoughtful.

"I don't think they will bother me," he said, presently.

"They will bother you as quickly as any one."

"I will be on my guard."

"That won't do much good."

"Why not?"

"Why, because they will leap out upon you from the timber by the roadside, and will have you a prisoner before you know it."

"I'll risk it."

"Oh, I know you are always ready to risk anything," said Bob, with a disgusted air. "You had better let me go along."

"No; I will get through all right, Bob."

Then Dick made his way down to where there was a boat, and untying the painter, got in and pushed off.

He seated himself, took up the oars and rowed toward the other shore.

He looked down the river as he got out near the middle of the stream, but did not see any ships.

"I guess the British will not venture up here," he told himself.

He was not long in reaching the east shore of the river, and tying his boat, he walked up the bluff, and was soon making his way along the road.

Presently he came to a house, and he turned aside and entered the yard.

He knocked on the door, and it was opened by a pleasant-faced woman of perhaps thirty-five years, who smiled when she saw the youth, and exclaimed:

"Oh, it is you, Captain Slater! I am glad to see you."

"How are you, Mrs. Saunders?" asked Dick.

"Quite well; and how are you?"

"I am feeling well; is Mr. Saunders at home?"

"No; he has gone to Continental village."

Dick looked disappointed.

"I am sorry he is not at home," he said; "I wished to see him."

"What was it you wanted, Captain Slater?"

"I wanted to ask the loan of a saddle horse, Mrs. Saunders."

"Then it doesn't matter whether John is at home or not; you go to the stable and help yourself."

"Thank you, Mrs. Saunders."

Dick went to the stable and bridled and saddled a horse, and led the animal out of the stable and to the road.

"Tell Mr. Saunders that I will bring the horse back either to-night or to-morrow forenoon," Mrs. Saunders, he called to the woman, who was standing in the door.

"Very well, Captain Slater. Keep the horse as long as you want to."

"Thank you."

Then Dick leaped into the saddle and rode away.

Mrs. Saunders gazed after the youth with a look of admiration in her eyes.

She thought a great deal of Dick, for the reason that two days before he had happened along just as three cowboys were making an attack on Mr. Saunders, and had helped the patriot—for such he was—thrash the three cowboys and put them to flight.

Dick had taken supper with them, and so now, when he came there and asked for the loan of a horse, Mrs. Saunders was only too glad to let him have it.

As for Dick, as he rode along he was thinking deeply.

He was wondering why he had been sent with a message to Samuel Fosdick.

Dick could not think who or what this man was, that he should be written to by General Arnold.

"Well, I suppose it's none of my business," the youth said to himself. "Perhaps I will learn all about it after I have delivered the letter."

Onward Dick rode.

He was not familiar with the road, and had to stop occasionally at a farmhouse to ask the way.

At noon he stopped at a farmhouse and asked if he could get dinner there, and feed for his horse.

"Yas, sartinly," replied the farmer, a rough-looking man, who looked to be capable of almost any kind of meanness.

This did not worry Dick, however; he was only going to stay to dinner, and he did not think the man would bother him.

The fellow asked a number of questions while they were eating dinner. Of course Dick did not give him any satisfaction.

The man frowned when he found that he could not get any information regarding his guest, and lapsed into silence. This suited the youth better, and so he did not say anything, save to ask for such food as was beyond his reach on the table.

They had just finished eating when the door suddenly opened and five men strode into the room and covered Dick with their pistols.

"Surrender, young feller!" said the leader.

CHAPTER II.

THE PATRIOT DAUGHTER OF A TORY.

Dick was taken at a disadvantage.

He was seated at the table, and before he could rise they had him covered with the pistols.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"Et means that ye air our pris'ner," was the reply.

"Why am I your prisoner?"

"Becos ye air er rebel, as I hev jest said."

"I am not a rebel."

The fellow laughed, and his comrades echoed the laugh.

The farmer, Dick noted, seemed to be well pleased with the way things were going. He nodded to the five, and it was evident that he knew them.

"Ye air er rebel," the leader said, "an' I know et."

Then he told one of his companions to take Dick's weapons away from him, and bind his arms.

The fellow advanced, and as he did so Dick rose, as though to make it easy for him.

"Be keerful, young feller," warned the leader.

The cowboy—for such Dick was sure the fellows were—came around to where Dick stood and started to unbuckle the youth's belt. He only started to do so, however, for Dick suddenly seized him around the waist and made a

dash for the front door, holding the fellow in such a way that it would be impossible for his comrades to fire without wounding the cowboy.

"Stop!" cried the leader; "stop, er we'll shoot ye!"

But Dick did not stop.

He knew that they would not fire, so long as their comrade was where he would be likely to receive the bullet.

Dick reached the door and leaped through it. As he did so the men all made a dash toward the door, yelling to him to stop.

The fellow Dick had hold of struggled to free himself, but could not do so. Dick held him in a grip of iron.

Dick ran toward the stable, dragging the man along, in spite of the fellow's efforts to hold back.

After them came the other cowboys, yelling to them to stop.

The stable was reached quickly, and Dick stepped through the doorway, and, still holding the fellow in front of him as a shield, drew a pistol and leveled it.

"Stop!" he cried. "I am a dead shot, and I will kill one of you if you come any nearer!"

There was something convincing in the tone of the youth's voice, and the cowboys paused and stood, hesitating.

"Let Bill go!" called out the leader.

"I will do nothing of the kind. I am going to keep Bill right here, and he is going to stay with me until I am away from this place in safety; so go away and let us alone. If you fool around you may cause his death, and one or more of you will likely get hurt also."

The cowboys looked at one another doubtfully. It was evident that they hardly knew what to do.

"Go back to the house!" ordered Dick. "I will give you until I count five, and if you are not moving by that time I will shoot one of your number dead. Be warned, for I mean what I say!"

The four cowboys exchanged words, and then turned and moved slowly back toward the house, which they entered just as soon as they arrived there, disappearing from Dick's view.

Then Dick pulled the cowboy across the stall to where the horse was, and when he had untied the halter strap and got the bridle on the animal he led the horse forth, still holding to the fellow, in spite of his struggles.

Dick made his way to the road, and, pausing long enough to take the cowboy's pistol out of his belt and throw it away, leaped into the saddle.

"Good-by! I'll see you again some time, perhaps," said Dick, ironically; and he dashed down the road at a gallop, just as the other cowboys came rushing out of the house, yelling at the top of their voices.

"Jove, those scoundrels came very near capturing me!" thought Dick. "I will have to look out, for there are a lot of such rascals running about these times."

He rode onward steadily, and arrived at North Castle about three o'clock.

He asked a man if he knew any one by the name of Samuel Fosdick.

"Yas, I know 'im," was the reply; "he lives in the big house up yender," pointing to a large house on a hill a third of a mile away.

"Thank you," said Dick, and he rode onward toward the house in question.

He rode up in front of the house, dismounted and tied his horse. Then he mounted the steps and knocked on the door.

It was opened by a pretty girl of perhaps sixteen years.

"Good-afternoon," said Dick.

"Good-afternoon, sir," was the reply.

"Can you tell me, miss, whether Mr. Fosdick is at home?"

The girl bowed.

"Yes, sir, he is at home; will you come in?"

"If you please," and Dick entered the house.

"Just step into the parlor and take a seat," said the girl; "I will send my father in at once."

Presently steps sounded, and a man entered the room.

He was tall and good looking, but there was something of arrogance in his air, and it did not impress Dick favorably.

"He may be a good man and all right in every way," thought Dick; "but I don't like any one that acts as though he thought he were better than the common run of people."

"You wish to see me?" the man asked, as Dick rose and bowed a greeting.

"Yes, sir."

"Your name, please?"

"I'm Captain Dick Slater, of the patriot army. I am just from West Point, sir." Dick spoke with dignity, for he felt that this was a quality that should not be all on one side.

The man started, and it was evident that he was interested.

"Ah, indeed? You are from West Point, then!"

"Yes, sir; I have a letter here from General Arnold."

Dick drew it from his pocket and extended it toward the man.

Mr. Fosdick took the letter, and said:

"You will excuse me, Captain Slater, while I retire to my library. The letter will doubtless require an answer, so I may as well go there at once."

"Certainly," said Dick, and he bowed and sat down, while the host turned and strode from the room.

He was gone perhaps ten minutes, and then returned, with the announcement that the letter did not require an answer.

"Very well," said Dick; "then I will be going."

"Won't you stay and take supper with us?" Mr. Fosdick asked.

"No," said Dick; "I will be going."

He bade the man good-by and went out of doors and

mounted his horse and rode down the hill, following the winding road, it twisting in and out among the trees like a huge serpent.

He had almost reached the bottom of the hill, when he found himself suddenly confronted by a slight figure, seemingly that of a youth of fifteen or sixteen—though Dick could only guess at this, for the person had his face covered by a cloth mask. All Dick could see of the face were the eyes.

He reined his horse up quickly, with an exclamation of amazement.

"Hello," he cried; "who are you, and what do you want?"

"It does not matter who I am," was the reply, in what was evidently a disguised voice, but which Dick believed he recognized as being that of the girl who had admitted him to the Fosdick home.

But why had she donned boy's clothing and intercepted him? This was a question which Dick could not answer, but he thought it possible that the matter would be explained before the interview ended.

"What do you mean?" asked Dick, gently.

"I wished to tell you something that will surprise you," was the reply. "I hardly know what the affair means, and perhaps you will be able to give a better guess than I can."

Dick was interested, and said:

"Go on! Tell me whatever it is that you have to tell at once."

"I will do so; but first, you brought a letter to my—to Mr. Fosdick from General Arnold, at West Point, did you not?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is what I cannot understand, sir. I happen to know that my—that Mr. Fosdick is not really in sympathy with the people of America, and I cannot understand how it happens that a patriot general should be writing him letters."

Dick started, and an exclamation escaped his lips.

"He is deceiving General Arnold!" the youth exclaimed; "and I have no doubt that he is sending all the information he secures down to General Clinton, at New York."

"Do you think General Arnold does not know my—that Mr. Fosdick is not a patriot?" the seeming youth asked.

"Of course he does not know it, miss; I——"

The other uttered a cry, and shrank back.

"You know me?" was the exclamation.

"I suspected that you were the young lady who admitted me to the house up yonder, at the very first, miss."

The other was silent for a few moments, and then said, slowly and earnestly:

"You may wonder that I should have stopped you and told you about my father; but the truth is, he is cruel to me, and has never treated me as a father should treat a daughter. I am a patriot, and he knows it, and it makes him harder on me. Of course I would not want any

harm to come to him, as a result of what I have told you; but I felt that it would not be right for me to let your general be deceived longer."

"You have done right, miss, and I assure you that I shall not let your father be harmed, if I can help it. Of course he thinks he is doing right."

"Yes; I am sure he thinks so."

Dick looked down at the ground and pondered.

"I wonder what General Arnold wrote to your father about?" he said, slowly.

"It may not have been anything important," said the girl. "General Arnold and some of his soldiers spent the night here a few weeks ago. They were enroute to West Point, and it became dark just as they got here, and so they stopped. Father entertained them and treated them nice, and it may be that your general has written merely a friendly letter, containing no information that would be of use to the British at all."

"I hope that such is the case," said Dick. "If I could think that I would feel very well satisfied."

"I would feel better satisfied myself," said the girl.

"I thank you for what you have told me, miss; I will tell General Arnold, and then he will be careful in the future; and if he should write to your father, would not put anything in the letter that would be of value to the British, even though your father told them all that the letter contained."

"You are welcome, Captain Slater—I heard you tell father your name—and now, I am going to ask that you do me a favor."

"Anything that you ask, miss," was the prompt reply.

The girl drew a letter from an inside pocket of the coat she wore.

"You brought a letter for my father," she said; "will you carry one back with you?"

"I shall be glad to do so, miss. The address is on it?"

"Yes."

She stepped nearer and handed the letter to Dick, who took it and looked at the name written there.

"Tom Wentworth," he said, slowly. "I know him."

"Do you?" The girl's face lighted up. "I am so glad! And will you hand the letter to him?"

"I most certainly will, Miss Fosdick."

"Oh, thank you!"

"Does your father know that you have a patriot sweetheart?" asked Dick.

"Yes," was the reply. "Tom's folks live only a mile from here. Father was glad when Tom joined the army, for he said he hoped to hear of Tom's death on some battlefield!" and the girl shuddered.

"And I hope that he will live through the war to make you happy, Miss Fosdick."

"Thank you; and now, good-by."

"Good-by," said Dick.

Then the girl stepped out of the road and quickly disappeared in the timber, and Dick rode onward.

He had gone only about one hundred and fifty yards

when a young man of perhaps twenty-one years of age stepped out from behind a tree and leveled a rifle at him.

"Stop, or die!" the young fellow said, sternly.

Dick brought his horse to a standstill, and then the young man said:

"I'll take the letter that girl gave you, if you please!"

CHAPTER III.

FOILING THE COWBOYS.

Dick stared at the speaker in amazement.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"None of your business! Just throw that letter down here, if you want to save your life!"

Dick eyed the young fellow keenly and searchingly. He was sure that he understood the matter. This young man was in love with Miss Fosdick, and had overheard the conversation between the girl and Dick, had seen her give the latter the letter, and was determined to get it, so as to keep it from reaching the person it was intended for.

Dick was sizing the young man up and wondering if he would shoot.

He decided the question in the affirmative. There was a determined, almost desperate, look on the young fellow's face and in his eyes, and the Liberty Boy realized that if he made an attempt to get away without complying with the demand made he would have to risk a bullet.

Still Dick was determined not to give up the letter.

He had given the girl his promise that he would deliver the letter to the person to whom it was addressed, and he was going to do it, if such a thing was possible.

In order to gain time and get a chance to do something to counteract the advantage which the youth had over him Dick began talking.

"Why do you want the letter?" he asked.

"That is no business of yours," was the snarling reply.

"I think it is; the letter was entrusted to my care, and I do not feel like giving it up to you unless you can prove to me that you have a right to it."

"I can do that easily enough."

"How?"

"With this!" and he shook the pistol threateningly. Dick shook his head.

"That is no proof that you have a right to the letter; that is simply proof that you are trying to use force to secure what does not belong to you."

"The letter may not belong to me now, but it soon will! Hand it over!"

The voice was exceedingly threatening, and there was a grim look on the face and in the eyes of the young man.

Dick realized that he was going to have to give the letter up, or take chances in retaining possession of it. Of

course it would be the latter, and he at once decided to bring the affair to a head.

He suddenly leaped off the horse, and kept the animal between himself and the young fellow, who, having been taken by surprise by the quick move, had not fired.

The fellow was trying to get a shot at Dick; but the Liberty Boy managed to keep his body sheltered pretty well, and at the same time he drew a pistol.

He leveled it under the horse's neck and pulled the trigger.

A wild yell of pain went up from the young man's lips, and he dropped the rifle as though it had suddenly become hot.

Dick's shot had been an effective one, for it had struck the young man in the arm, breaking it just below the elbow.

"You have only yourself to blame!" said Dick, then he leaped into the saddle and rode onward at a gallop, leaving the young fellow sitting on the ground nursing his wounded arm.

"I got out of that all right, after all," thought Dick. "I was afraid I was in for it, for that young man looked like a dangerous fellow."

Dick rode steadily onward, and mile after mile was gone over.

It was growing dark while he was yet two miles from the home of the Saunders, and he noted that a storm was brewing. Lighting was flashing in the west, and the deep rumble of thunder was heard.

"I will get to Mr. Saunders' before the storm breaks, I think," he said to himself, "and I guess I might as well stay there all night."

When he reached the gate leading to the barnlot he leaped down and opened it, and led the horse through and to the stable. He led the horse into the stable, unbridled and unsaddled him, and then made his way to the house. As he came opposite the window he looked in, and saw a sight that filled him with anger.

Mr. Saunders stood in the middle of the room, stripped to the waist, with his hands tied together behind him. At one side stood Mrs. Saunders, and Emma, her daughter, their arms bound also. Standing near Mr. Saunders were four rough looking men, and on the floor beside them was a pail filled with tar, and beside the pail was a bag of feathers.

Looking closer, Dick saw that two of the men were the fellows he had helped Mr. Saunders thrash a couple of days before. Undoubtedly they had come there to get revenge.

And again Dick was on hand to foil the rascals.

Mrs. Saunders and Emma were begging the ruffians not to put their plans into effect, but they received only jeers and laughter in reply.

"I will have to take a hand in this affair," said Dick, to himself; "and I will have to be quick if I keep them from giving Mr. Saunders the coat of tar and feathers."

He drew two pistols and made his way to the door.

He pulled the latch-string and pushed the door open.

The four men saw him, but before they could make a move to draw weapons Dick had them covered.

"I'll kill the first man that tries to draw a weapon," he said, sternly.

Exclamations of joy escaped the lips of Mrs. Saunders and Emma. Mr. Saunders looked relieved also.

The four cowboys stared at Dick in dismay.

"You here again?" growled the one who had received a thrashing at the youth's hands two days before.

"As you see," was the cool reply.

"Well, what do you mean by interfering in what doesn't concern you?"

"I am not doing so."

"Yes, you are."

"No; this concerns me. Mr. Saunders is a friend of mine, and I am not going to stand here and see you mistreat him."

"You had better keep out of the affair!" savagely.

"I could not think of doing so."

"You will wish that you had."

"Oh, I guess not. Just stop talking now, and do what I tell you."

"What do you want us to do?" sullenly.

"I want you to free the hands of Mr. Saunders, and of Mrs. Saunders and Emma also."

The fellow hesitated, but a look into the stern, threatening eyes of the Liberty Boy was sufficient, and he did as he had been ordered to do.

"Now, Mr. Saunders," said Dick, "you remove the clothing of these four men, and tie their hands, as they had done with you."

"All right, Dick. I will do so."

He did so, and then turned and looked inquiringly at the Liberty Boy.

"What next?" he asked.

Dick pointed to the pail and brush.

"Give them a good coat of tar," he ordered.

A look of pleasure came over the farmer's face, and he took up the brush and gave the cowboys a liberal dose of tar.

"You fellows look fine now," said Dick, sarcastically.

Their only reply was in the nature of groans.

"Now the feathers, Mr. Saunders," said Dick.

This brought a protest from the leader of the party.

"You'll be sorry for this!" he said.

"Oh, I don't think so," said Dick, calmly. "We are simply giving you a dose of your own medicine, that is all, and I am sure that we are justified in doing that."

"That is what I think," said Mr. Saunders.

"Stick a lot of feathers on!" said Dick; "they will be pretty looking birds, to be sure."

The farmer did so, using up all the feathers that were in the bag, and when he got through the four cowboys were a sight.

"Now get out of here," said Dick; "and don't ever come this way again. If you do, you will suffer worse treatment than has been accorded you this time."

"How are we to go? Are you going to leave our hands tied?"

"Certainly."

"But we want our clothes."

"Oh, yes! I never thought of that." Then Dick and Mrs. Saunders tied the clothing of the four up in bundles and fastened the bundles to the men's wrists.

"Now you get away from here," said Dick; "and as I told you awhile ago, don't come back."

The four muttered something unintelligible and stalked out of the house and away. It was just beginning to rain, and in another minute it was pouring.

"They will get nicely soaked," said Dick.

"It will wash the tar and feathers off!" said Emma.

"I think that it will take more than rain to get that stuff off!" said Mr. Saunders.

"Yes, indeed," from Dick.

Mr. Saunders quickly donned his clothing, and then breathed a sigh of relief.

"I'm glad you got here in time to put a stop to the affair, Captain Slater," he said. "Jove, I would have hated it had I been treated to a coat of tar and feathers."

"We are greatly in your debt, Captain Slater," said Mrs. Saunders.

"Not at all," said Dick. "I am glad that I was able to render you assistance, for those cowboys are in reality Tories, and I hate Tories."

CHAPTER IV.

SENT TO SPY ON THE BRITISH.

Early next morning Dick bade good-by to the Saunders and made his way down the river.

He found the boat where he had left it, and getting in, rowed across to the west shore.

Leaping ashore, he tied the boat and made his way up to the fort.

He was soon at headquarters, and was conducted to General Arnold's private room by the orderly.

"Ah, Dick," said the general. "I am glad to see you back. I suppose you delivered the letter to Mr. Fosdick?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good!"

Dick was silent a few moments, and then said:

"General Arnold, Mr. Fosdick is deceiving you."

A startled look appeared on the general's face, and he looked at Dick inquiringly.

"What do you mean, Dick?" he asked.

"Just what I say, sir; Mr. Fosdick is deceiving you. He told you he was a patriot, did he not?"

"Yes."

"Well, he is not a patriot!"

"He is not?"

"No."

"How do you know?"

"His daughter told me so."

"What! His daughter told you so?"

"Yes, sir."

"How came she to tell you?"

"She is a patriot, sir, and has a patriot sweetheart; and she said that she did not want that her father should deceive you and gain knowledge that he ought not to gain!"

"Well, well! That was kind of the girl, wasn't it?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And it is lucky that the matter I wrote to Mr. Fosdick about was a personal one, and had no military significance whatever."

"You are right, sir."

Arnold was silent a few moments, and then said:

"I am glad that I have learned this, though I don't think that I would have had occasion to write Mr. Fosdick again. At any rate, I would not have written anything that would have been of use to the British, had he carried the news to them."

Then he complimented Dick on the promptness with which he had done the work of carrying the letter, and dismissed him.

Dick went here and there in the fort, looking for Tom Wentworth, and at last found him.

"How are you, Tom?" said Dick.

"Good-morning, Dick," was the reply.

"I have something here for you, Tom."

"You have?" in surprise. "What is it?"

"You would never guess."

Tom smiled.

"I judge not," he said. "I never was good at guessing."

"I was away over to North Castle yesterday, Tom," said Dick; "now can you give a guess regarding the matter?"

The young soldier started, and an eager light appeared in his eyes.

"Did you—were you at the home of Mr. Fosdick, Dick?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Tom; and I saw his daughter."

"You did?" eagerly.

"Yes; and she gave me something to bring to you. Now I guess you will know what it is."

"A letter!" joyously.

"A letter," agreed Dick; "and here it is!"

He drew the letter from his pocket and handed it to Tom, who grasped it eagerly.

"Thank you, Dick!" he cried; "and now excuse me while I read it, will you?"

"Yes, indeed."

Then Dick walked away, and was soon back among the Liberty Boys.

He told them about having made the discovery that Mr. Fosdick was a Tory, and the youths unanimously agreed that it was lucky that he had learned the truth; otherwise

the Tory might have secured some information of value and carried it to the British general in New York.

Then Dick told about having turned the tables on the four cowboys, and when the youths heard how the four had been given a coat of tar and feathers they were delighted.

"Served them right, Dick," said Bob; "jove, I wish I had been there to see that the job was well done."

The other youths said the same.

General Washington had been up the river quite a ways for three days past, on a tour of investigation, and he returned that forenoon.

Just after dinner his orderly came to the quarters occupied by the Liberty Boys, and told Dick that the general wished to see him.

He went to headquarters at once, and was given a kindly greeting by the commander-in-chief.

"Are you willing to undertake a dangerous expedition, Dick?" the great man asked.

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply.

"Very well; I want you to go down into New York City and make the attempt to learn the plans of the British. They have kept quiet so long that I am becoming suspicious that it bodes us ill. I wish to learn if such is really the case."

"I will go at once, your excellency."

"Very well; do so, Dick."

The youth listened to the instructions which the commander-in-chief had to give, and then left headquarters. He went back to the Liberty Boys' quarters and began making preparations to start on the trip to New York City.

Bob wanted to go along.

"You must not think of going by yourself, Dick," he said.

"Yes, I'm going alone, Bob."

"But think, Dick; you may get into serious trouble."

"I'll risk it. I will be careful."

"How are you going?"

"On horseback."

"Which side of the river are you going down on?"

"This side."

Dick went ahead and made his arrangements, and then bridled and saddled his horse and rode away from West Point.

He was mounted on a splendid coal-black horse, a thoroughbred that he had captured from the British on Long Island two years before. He had reason to believe that the animal had belonged to General Howe, who was at that time commander-in-chief of the British army in America.

Onward rode the Liberty Boy.

When supper time came he was almost even with the north end of Manhattan Island.

He stopped at a farmhouse and asked if he could have supper and feed for his horse.

The farmer, a rough looking man, said that he could.

Dick alighted, and the man led the horse to the stable and fed him.

Then, in company with Dick, he went to the house.

The woman of the house was not very prepossessing in appearance, but Dick was used to seeing all kinds of people, and did not mind this.

He ate heartily, and then paid for his supper, mounted his horse, and rode onward.

Scarcely had he taken his departure when the man took down a rifle from over the fireplace and left the house. His wife did not say a word, but it was evident that she knew what her husband thought of doing.

The man went through the timber and finally came to the road, which made a long bend after leaving his house. By cutting through the timber he had been enabled to reach the road before Dick came along.

It was now quite dark, but the villain—for such he was—was sure he could drop the horseman. The truth was that the fellow was a member of a cowboy band, and he was going to do this work alone and secure Dick's horse, and whatever money and valuables the youth possessed.

Presently the sound of hoofbeats was heard, and the ruffian cocked his rifle.

"I kinder hate to kill 'im," the villain said to himself; "but et's ther on'y safe way. I'm bound to hev that hoss, an' ther youngster has got some money, I know."

Soon the horseman was almost abreast of the would-be assassin, and the fellow leveled his rifle and took aim. His finger pressed the trigger, and just as he did so the horse gave a snort, and leaped forward, and to one side.

A rabbit had scurried across the road in front of the horse, frightened him, and thus saving Dick's life, for the rifle cracked at this instant and the bullet that would have undoubtedly ended the youth's life missed him by at least two feet.

Dick's first impulse was to stop, leap down and go and make the attempt to get his hands on the would-be assassin, and then he decided that it would be as well to go on his way.

"I escaped, and that is enough," he told himself. "I would just lose time, and even if I got hold of him I would not give him the punishment he really deserves."

Then he got to wondering who the person could have been.

Of a sudden he thought of the man at whose house he had eaten supper.

"It would not surprise me if he were the man who did it," the youth said to himself. "He was a villainous looking fellow, and his wife did not look much better than her husband."

Meanwhile the would-be assassin, angry and disappointed, was striding back toward his home.

When he reached the house and entered his wife looked at him inquiringly.

He shook his head.

"Missed 'im," he growled.

"What! Ye missed 'im, Jeff Thorp?" in surprise; "an' he not more'n twenty yards away when yer shot at 'im!"

"His hoss got skeered at somethin' jest as I pulled trigger, an' jumped, an' ther bullet missed ther feller er yard, I'll bet."

"Waal, that is too bad, Jeff," said the woman, shaking her head; "I berleeve ye'd hev got er lot uv money ef ye hed brung 'im down."

"So do I, an' ther hoss is worth er lot. Et was ther best hoss I ever seen in all my life."

"Waal, ye lost yer chanst, Jeff."

"Yas, but I wa'n't ter blame."

The two talked as coolly as though they were honest people, discussing some disappointment of a regular and legitimate nature.

"Ye hed oughter knocked 'im on ther head while he wuz here, Jeff," the woman said.

"I guess yer right, ole woman."

CHAPTER V.

DICK JOINS THE BRITISH ARMY.

An hour and a half later Dick arrived at a point opposite the city of New York.

He knew where he was, having been there before. He was within a mile of Paulus Hook, where there was a ferry across the Hudson river.

Dick dismounted and tied his horse to a tree, using a rope at least twenty feet long. This would permit the animal to graze around on the grass.

Then he made his way in the direction of Paulus Hook.

Dick was dressed in ordinary citizen's clothing, and looked like a farmer boy of the region.

A walk of twenty-five minutes brought him to the ferry.

The boat was just leaving the shore, and Dick ran swiftly down the bank and leaped aboard.

"Hello! What's your hurry?" growled a man against whom Dick bumped.

"I didn't want the boat to leave me," said Dick.

"Well, be more careful how you jump around. I don't like to be bumped into in such an unceremonious fashion."

"I am sorry," said Dick. "I did not do it purposely."

"Oh, I know that."

Dick noted that the man wore a British uniform. There was a lantern near by on the boat, which made it possible to see this much.

"Who are you?" the redcoat asked, presently.

"My name is Bob Burton," replied Dick.

"Where do you live?"

"About three miles away toward the northwest."

"What are you going to the city for?"

"I want to see the British army."

"Oh, that is what you want, is it?"

"Yes."

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"Humph! You are old enough to join the army."

"Yes, I suppose I am."

"Why don't you do it, then?"

"I'd like to; but father and mother wouldn't want me to do so."

"Why not? Are they rebels?"

"No; but they are afraid I might get killed."

"Humph! You might fall in the creek and get drowned; or the horses might run away and kill you. You are in about as much danger of getting killed on the farm as you would be in the army."

"That's so, I guess," said Dick.

"Of course it is; and I think that a likely young fellow like you ought to join the army and help fight for the king."

"I'd like to," said Dick. He was thinking, while talking, and the idea came to him that it might be a good thing if he were to join the British army. He would thus have a good chance to learn the intentions of the British. The soldiers would talk, and he could listen, and thus acquire the very information he wished to secure.

"I'll tell you what you do," said the redcoat; "you come along with me when we get across, and I will take you to my captain. He will be glad to enroll your name, I know."

"All right; I'll do it," said Dick.

"That's the way to talk."

The ferryman approached now, and Dick paid his fare. When they reached the shore the redcoat and Dick left the boat and made their way up into the city.

Presently Dick's companion stopped in front of a building and tried the door. It opened to his touch, and he led the way into the house, Dick following.

A lamp was burning in the hall, and the sound of voices and laughter came from a room on the left.

Dick's companion opened the door of this room and entered, Dick following.

It required considerable nerve on Dick's part to do this. He had been in New York several times before during the past two years on spying expeditions, and his face had become known to some of the British. He was taking chances in venturing thus into the presence of a number of British soldiers.

There were at least thirty soldiers and officers in the room, and they gave Dick's companion nods of greeting, while one asked:

"Who is the youngster, Frank?"

"Oh, a young chap who wants to join the army."

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yes; where is the captain?"

"He just went upstairs; will be back right away."

"All right; this young fellow is Bob Burton, comrades, and he will soon be a comrade."

The soldiers nodded toward Dick, and some called him

by the name, and said they hoped to become better acquainted.

Dick politely said he hoped so, too.

He was relieved to think that there was no one present who had ever seen him. At any rate, no one had acted in a manner that would indicate that they had any suspicions regarding him.

"I guess I am safe," he told himself.

Presently an officer wearing the uniform of a captain entered the room.

"Ah, here's the captain," said Dick's companion. "Come along, Bob."

Soon they were standing in front of the captain, who looked inquiringly at the British soldier and then at Dick.

"Who have you there, Farrell?" he asked.

"This is Bob Burton, Captain Fairbanks," was the reply. "He is a young American who wants to join the British army and help fight for the king."

"Ah, indeed. Well, we shall be only too glad to have him do so."

"That is what I told him."

"I will enroll your name," said the captain; "you may consider yourself a British soldier from this moment."

"Thank you, sir," said Dick.

Then he mingled with the soldiers, talking, and they asked him where he lived, and other questions, all of which he answered promptly.

Presently he got to talking with an apparently easy-going, good-natured fellow, and he began asking questions. He made inquiries that were calculated to draw forth considerable information; but he asked them in such an artless, simple manner that nothing was thought of it.

In this manner Dick learned that, so far as the soldiers knew, there was no plan on foot for attacking the patriot army.

"The rebels are so far away that we could not very well get at them," the soldier said.

"Where are they?" asked Dick.

"Up at West Point."

"That's up on the Hudson?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you go up there with the warships?"

"I guess that has been talked of. But we learned that there was an obstruction in the river, and so gave up the idea."

"Is that so? What kind of an obstruction is it?"

"An immense chain, which is stretched from shore to shore, and which is protected by water batteries."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Then I don't think there is much use for me to join the army; I won't get to fight any."

"Later on you will. You can wait, and when the time comes there will be fighting in plenty."

"I hope so."

Presently the soldier Dick was talking to suggested that

they take a little walk on the street before going to bed, and the youth said he would be glad to do so.

"I would like to take a walk along Broadway after night," he said.

"Come along."

They went upon the street, and walked down Broadway to Bowling Green. Then they crossed over and came up on the other side of Broadway.

Dick pretended to be delighted and impressed by everything he saw. He acted the part of an unsophisticated country youth to perfection, and his comrade did not suspect that the youth was acting.

Presently Dick was given a surprise. He and his companion came suddenly face to face with two men, almost underneath a street lamp, where it was light enough to see the features distinctly. One of the two was a British officer, a colonel, and the other was—Mr. Fosdick!

Dick recognized the man instantly, and Mr. Fosdick recognized him, and gave utterance to an exclamation. He made a move, as though to stop and confront Dick, and then thought better of it and walked on past.

Dick's companion had noticed the man's action.

"That fellow seemed to recognize you," he said, looking back.

"Is that so?" said Dick, innocently, also looking back.

As he turned his head he saw that Mr. Fosdick and the officer had stopped, and the former was saying something and pointing toward Dick.

"He is telling the officer who I am," said Dick to himself.

The Liberty Boy knew it would be useless to try to remain among the redcoats. He had been recognized, and if he went back to British quarters he would be made a prisoner within an hour.

There seemed to be only one thing to do, and that was to make a bolt for liberty.

They were near a side street, and without another word Dick turned and dashed down this street at the top of his speed.

"Here! Hold on!" cried Dick's late companion; "what is the matter? Where are you going?"

"After him!" yelled Fosdick and the British colonel, in unison. "He is a rebel spy! Don't let him get away."

The soldier stared at the speakers in a dazed, wondering manner, and then turned and looked after Dick. The soldier did not seem to be able to comprehend the matter so suddenly.

"After him, I tell you!" roared the British colonel, advancing toward the soldier.

"Yes, catch him! Don't let him get away!" cried Fosdick, also advancing.

This aroused the soldier, and turning, he ran after Dick at the top of his speed.

He was not nearly so fast a runner as Dick, however, and so not only did not gain on Dick, but lost ground.

The Liberty Boy had secured a good lead and was making the most of it.

"I will escape, I am sure," he said to himself; "but I will have to be very careful, or I will not be able to get safely out of the city. Mr. Fosdick will tell who I am, and an alarm will be sent out, and every possible effort will be made to capture me."

On Dick ran.

He glanced back, saw that he was nearly a block ahead of his pursuers, and then darted around a corner and bumped into a pedestrian with such force that both parties fell backward to the sidewalk.

CHAPTER VI.

RECOGNIZED.

The person Dick had bumped against and upset was a British officer, a lieutenant.

He was a hot-headed, peppery fellow, and was on his feet as quickly as was the case with Dick, and wanting to fight.

"Who are you?" he spluttered. "And why did you bump against me in such fashion, you blundering idiot?"

"Idiot yourself!" retorted Dick; "get out of the way!"

"I'll teach you!" the angry lieutenant roared, and he leaped forward and struck at Dick with all his might.

Dick felt that he had no time to waste.

His pursuers would be on the scene in a very few moments.

The thing to do was to get away from the spot at once, and this the Liberty Boy was determined to do.

The youth ducked as the redcoat sprang at him, and the man's fist went over Dick's shoulder. Then out shot the Liberty Boy's fist.

Crack!

It struck the lieutenant fair between the eyes, and down he went at full length upon the sidewalk.

Dick did not lose another instant.

He even now heard the patter-patter of running feet, and knew his pursuers were near at hand.

He dashed on up the street at the top of his speed.

Around the corner came the redcoat who had been chasing Dick. He stumbled over the lieutenant, who was just starting to scramble to his feet, and fell headlong. The next moment Mr. Fosdick and the colonel came running around the corner, and they, too, stumbled over the lieutenant and went down.

The four were there, struggling and kicking and calling one another hard names.

It was a great mix-up.

The lieutenant was perhaps the maddest of the lot. He had been upset in the first place, had been knocked down by the fist of the person who had run against him; and now he had been stumbled over and upset by three more men, and it was enough to make him angry.

He struggled to get up, and kicked and struck out

lustily. One of the heartiest kicks he administered happened to be upon the person of the colonel, and that officer was very angry, indeed, and returned the kick with interest, besides talking to the lieutenant in a manner that was calculated to make him feel any other way but happy.

"You have kicked a superior officer, sir," roared the colonel. "Yes; you have kicked a superior officer, and I am going to have you courtmartialed, that is what I am going to do! I'll teach you, sir!"

The lieutenant explained that he did not know that he was kicking any officer, much less a superior one, and apologized so humbly that the colonel relented and promised not to have him courtmartialed.

"Thank you, sir," said the lieutenant; "but what is all this trouble about, anyway? Who was that young fellow that upset me?"

"A rebel spy, sir; he was, indeed, no other than the famous Dick Slater, the rebel spy and scout, and the captain of the Liberty Boys, as they are called."

"Jove, I have a crow to pick with that fellow, if I ever get within reaching distance of him," frowned the lieutenant. "He upset me by running against me; first, and then knocked me down afterward when I was going to get even with him. I would like to get a chance to square accounts with him."

"Come along with us, then," said the colonel; "perhaps we may be able to run the rascal down and capture him."

"I don't think there is much chance of doing so," said Mr. Fosdick. "He is out of sight now."

"We will try, at any rate. Come on, all!"

The four set out down the street, and went in the direction taken by Dick. They kept a sharp lookout ahead and to the right and left, but did not again catch sight of the fugitive.

They gave it up presently and paused and looked at one another in a chagrined and disappointed way.

"He has escaped," said the colonel.

"Yes, it is useless to look further for him," said Mr. Fosdick.

The other two concurred in this view of the case.

"Let us go to headquarters," said the colonel. "We will make our report to General Clinton, who will no doubt send out orders for the soldiers to keep a sharp lookout for the rebel spy. That will make it a difficult matter for him to escape from the city."

"So it will," agreed Mr. Fosdick.

These two then made their way toward headquarters, while the other two made their way toward their quarters.

When the redcoat got back to his quarters and told his comrades that the young fellow who had been there that evening, and who had pretended to join the British army, was no other than Dick Slater, the famous patriot spy, they were amazed.

They uttered exclamations of astonishment, and Frank

Farrell, the soldier who had introduced Dick into the building, was somewhat chagrined.

His comrades laughed at him and joked him about his new recruit, all of which he took as good naturedly as possible. He knew it would do no good to get angry; indeed it would have been much worse for him, for his comrades would have laughed at him and made sport of him more than ever.

Meanwhile what of Dick?

After knocking the lieutenant down he had dashed on down the street at the top of his speed.

He wished to get back to the Hudson river side of the city, and so he turned to the right at the first corner he came to, and ran in that direction.

Dick soon came to Broadway and slowed down to a walk. He crossed this street and then made his way onward toward the river.

He was not long in arriving at the ferry landing.

He decided that to act boldly would be his best course, and so he strode on the ferryboat and knocked on the door of the little ferry house at one end.

The ferryman opened the door and recognized him as being the youth who had come across with him a couple of hours before.

"Hello! Back again!" he exclaimed. "What do you want?"

"I want you to take me across the river."

"But I thought you were going to stay in New York. I heard you tell that redcoat you were with that you wanted to join the British army."

Dick saw the man was somewhat suspicious, but he kept perfectly cool, and said, quietly:

"I have joined the British army."

"You have, eh?"

"Yes."

"Why are you leaving the city so soon, then?"

"I am going back home to tell my parents that I have joined the British army," was the reply.

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yes; now take me across, will you?"

"Certainly."

The ferryman went to work, and a few minutes later the ferryboat moved slowly out from the landing. It had not gone more than one hundred feet before cries of "Stop! Stop!" were heard, and a number of forms were seen on the shore, it being possible to see them against the slight background of light made by the street lamps up in the city.

"Hello! What does that mean?" exclaimed the ferryman.

"I don't know," replied Dick, calmly. But he did know, only too well.

"Those people want to cross, and I will go back and get them."

Instantly Dick drew a pistol and leveled it.

"You will do nothing of the kind!" he said, sternly. "Keep on going!"

"The deuce! What do you mean?" the ferryman gasped.

"What I say!" grimly.

"Stop that boat and come back!" yelled one of the redcoats on the shore. "That young scoundrel you have with you is a rebel spy, and if you don't come back we will have you arrested and hanged as a rebel sympathizer."

"Hear that!" gasped the ferryman. "I must go back."

"You will do nothing of the kind," sternly; "if you try to do so I will shoot you dead and run the boat myself. Just take your choice between the two evils."

"You would not dare shoot."

"You will find your mistake if you make it necessary for me to fire," said Dick. "I am a patriot spy, just as they state, and for you to turn back would mean my capture and death; so you can see that I will not hesitate. In a case where it is my death or the other man's, it is the other man who must suffer, be sure of that."

"I give up!" the ferryman said. "I will ferry you across."

"You are sensible."

Dick kept a sharp eye on the man, and held his pistol in readiness for instant use, however. He was not willing to take any chances.

The redcoats on shore, seeing that the ferryboat was not coming back, yelled threats that made the ferryman shiver.

"I'm in trouble," he said. "I have no doubt that I shall be arrested, and shot or hanged."

"Not a bit of it!" said Dick. "They won't do anything to you."

"You think not?"

"I am sure of it."

"I wish I could be."

"You can; all you will have to do will be to tell them that I forced you at the muzzle of a pistol to keep on going, and they will not bother you. They could not expect a man to give up his life needlessly."

"Perhaps not," dubiously.

They were almost to the west shore now, and as soon as the ferryboat reached the landing Dick stepped ashore.

"Now, go back and tell the redcoats what I told you to tell them," advised Dick. "They will be less likely to do you injury than if you put on a bold front; and, too, if you go right back they will have you bring them across, in the hope that they will be able to catch me, and thus their anger against you will be appeased in a measure."

"That is a good idea, I think, and I will act upon it."

Then Dick hastened away, while the ferryman started back toward the east shore.

Twenty minutes later the Liberty Boys arrived at the spot where he had left Major, his horse.

The animal was still there, and was lying down, resting easy, but rose and whinnied a welcome as Dick approached.

"Good old Major," said Dick; "we must be up and away from here in a hurry."

Dick quickly bridled and saddled the horse, and then,

leading him out to the road, mounted and rode away toward the north.

He rode onward for an hour, and then, feeling sure that he was not in any danger of being overtaken by the redcoats, even if they had secured horses after coming across the river, he stopped and went into camp.

He rolled up in his blanket and was soon sound asleep.

How long he had slept he did not know, but he was awoken along in the small hours of the morning by hearing voices.

He sat up and listened.

CHAPTER VII.

A DARING CAPTURE.

Dick learned from the conversation that the two were soldiers who had been visiting at their homes, and were on their way back to New York.

They passed on, and Dick got up, bridled and saddled his horse, mounted and rode onward toward the north.

When daylight came he stopped at a cabin beside the road and asked if he could have breakfast there, and feed for his horse.

He was told that he could, and his horse was led to the stable by an eighteen-year-old youth, while Dick entered the house and sat down to talk to the man, while the women folks were busy in the kitchen.

Dick soon learned that the man was a patriot.

He was glad to know this; it made it more pleasant for him, and he could speak more freely.

When breakfast was over Dick bade the members of the family good-by and mounted his horse and rode onward.

The country was rough and the road crooked, and anything but good, so it took the Liberty Boy until noon to get to West Point.

Everything was quiet there.

Dick went to headquarters, and as General Washington, accompanied by Lafayette and Hamilton, had gone to Hartford to have an interview with Rochambeau, the youth reported to Arnold.

That officer listened with attention to Dick's story.

"So everything seems to be quiet in the city, eh, Dick?" he remarked; "well, I am glad that such is the case. I hope the British may not make an attack on West Point during the absence of General Washington."

"I guess the fort would be ably defended, sir," said Dick, who admired Arnold for his dashing bravery.

"Thank you, Dick," said Arnold; but he seemed saddened by the compliment, rather than pleased.

Then Dick told him about having seen Mr. Fosdick down in the city, in company with the British colonel.

"That proves that he really is a Tory, General Arnold," said Dick.

The officer nodded.

"Yes, Dick," he said, with a sigh. "One hardly knows whom to trust these days."

Dick did not think much about this at the time, but he remembered it afterward.

Presently Arnold said:

"I'll tell you what I wish you would do, Dick."

"What, sir?"

"I wish you would take ten or a dozen of your Liberty Boys and go over across the river and down to North Castle, and capture this Tory, Fosdick, and bring him here a prisoner."

"I will do so, sir," said Dick, promptly.

"Very well. I will hold him a prisoner here until he sees the error of his ways. I will teach him that it does not pay to deal double with us."

Dick left headquarters and went to where the Liberty Boys were stationed.

He selected nine of the youths and told them to get ready to go with him.

"Where to?" asked Bob Estabrook.

"Over across the river."

"And then where?"

"To North Castle."

"What are we going to do there?"

"Capture the Tory, Samuel Fosdick."

"Good! That will be all right."

The youths were soon ready, and made their way down to the river and got into a boat and rowed across to the east shore.

They landed, tied the boat and made their way to the home of Mr. Saunders.

They were given a warm greeting.

"Have the cowboys bothered you any since the other night?" asked Dick.

"No," said Mr. Saunders. "That seems to have squelched them."

"But I tell John to be very careful and keep a sharp lookout," said Mrs. Saunders. "They are likely to come back at any time."

"They might do so," said Dick; "still, they may be satisfied with what they have received, and stay away."

"I hope so," from Mrs. Saunders.

Then Dick asked if Mr. Saunders could lend him some horses.

"I have four you can borrow," the patriot said.

"I will have to have six more. Where can I get them?"

"We have a couple of patriot neighbors," said Mr. Saunders; "I think you can get six horses from the two places."

The homes of the two patriots were visited at once, and the horses secured.

Then the youths mounted and rode away in the direction of North Castle.

They were at the foot of the hill leading to the home

of Mr. Fosdick when a girl of eighteen years suddenly appeared before them, and motioned for them to stop.

The girl was Mary Fosdick.

"Stop!" she said. "You must not go up to the house, Captain Slater."

"Why not, Miss Fosdick?" asked Dick.

"For the reason that it will be as much as the lives of yourself and comrades will be worth."

"How is that?" in surprise.

"There is a company of British soldiers there, Captain Slater."

"Ha! You say so, Miss Fosdick?"

"Yes; they came here with papa this afternoon, when he returned from New York."

"Are they troopers?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wonder why they have come up here?"

"I am not sure, Captain Slater. I tried to overhear all that was talked about, but could not do so. I think, however, that they intend to worry the patriots of the vicinity, and to, at the same time, be where they can go across to West Point, if an attack is made on the fort by the British."

"Humph!" said Dick. "We will have to watch the red-coats."

"That is about all we can do at present," said Bob; "they have a hundred men, while we have only ten."

At this moment the thunder of hoofbeats was heard coming from the direction of the Fosdick home.

"Fly!" cried Mary. "Fly for your lives! Your presence here has been discovered, and the troopers are coming!"

The girl ran into the timber and disappeared from view quickly, as she finished speaking, and Dick gave the command to retreat.

"We will have to run for it," he said. "It will be a question of which have the better horses."

The youths whirled their horses' heads and dashed away in the direction from which they had just come.

As they did so a party of British troopers came dashing around a bend in the road not one hundred yards distant.

They caught sight of the Liberty Boys and set up a yell of delight.

Perhaps the yell was intended to have a terrifying effect on the fugitives, but if so, it failed. The Liberty Boys had heard the yelling of enemies before.

On they dashed, and after them came the redcoats.

The youths were mounted on horses that were not used to such work as they were now engaged in. They were in reality farm animals; but it happened that the horses ridden by the British dragoons were about on an equality with those of the Liberty Boys; so it was about an even race.

The British troopers yelled to the youths to stop and surrender, but, of course, they might as well have saved their breath.

It was quite a race, but darkness came on at last and put a stop to it.

The British troopers rode back to the Fosdick home, disappointed and disgusted, and the Liberty Boys paused and went into camp.

"This beats anything I have heard of lately," said Bob Estabrook, with an air of disgust, as they were eating the cold bread they had brought with them. "Here we came away over to this part of the country to capture a man, and came very near being captured ourselves!"

"We would have been captured or killed had it not been for Mary Fosdick," said Dick.

"That's so," said Mark Morrison. "She's a fine girl, isn't she?"

"Yes; she is Tom Wentworth's sweetheart."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Well, the question now is, what are we going to do?" asked Bob.

"That is the question that is worrying me," said Dick. "I hate to return and report to General Arnold that we have failed, and I don't see how we are to capture Mr. Fosdick."

"We might slip into the house, away in the small hours of the morning and get him out and away, Dick, don't you think?"

Dick looked thoughtful.

"We might do so," he said; "but it would be extremely difficult, and—wouldn't it be treating Mary a bit mean, after she gave us the warning that saved us from being captured?"

"It might seem so," said Bob, "but all is fair in war, and I don't suppose that her father will be injured. General Arnold will simply hold him a prisoner awhile, and teach him a lesson."

They discussed the matter quite awhile, and at last decided that they would make an attempt.

An hour later they mounted and rode back in the direction of the Fosdick home.

They were at the foot of the hill by half-past ten o'clock.

They led their horses aside into the timber, and tied them to trees.

Then they lay down to rest and wait till the small hours of the morning.

About half-past twelve o'clock they got up and began making preparations for the work before them.

After some thought Dick decided that five of the youths would be enough to go into the house; the other five were to remain there with the horses.

The five set out and made their way slowly up the hill; there was no hurry. They had the rest of the night for the work, if they wished to use the time.

They were soon on top of the hill, and then they advanced cautiously toward the house.

They tried several windows, and at last they found one that was unfastened.

Pushing it up, they stood and listened for a few moments, to see if the noise had been heard.

It had not; at any rate, no sound was heard to indicate that such was the case.

"Bob and I will enter," whispered Dick; "you three boys stay there and keep a sharp lookout. If you hear anything suspicious give utterance to a low whistle."

The youths said they would, and then Dick and Bob climbed through the window.

They had a difficult and dangerous task ahead of them, and realized the fact fully; but they were not to be deterred by danger.

They found a candle burning in the front hallway, and took it and made their way from room to room on the ground floor. It was their idea that they would find Mr. Fosdick occupying a downstairs room, and they did.

They found him, fully dressed, stretched out on a sofa in the library, and, having closed the door and locked it, they made ready to make a prisoner of the Tory.

They decided to seize him simultaneously, and thus prevent him from giving the alarm and arouse the British soldiers, who were undoubtedly sleeping upstairs.

When they were ready Dick gave the signal and he seized the Tory by the throat, while Bob seized him by the arms. Of course Mr. Fosdick was awakened instantly, but, although he struggled to free himself, he could not do it; neither could he give utterance to a cry. Dick's grasp was too tight, and the man could not utter so much as a gasp.

That he recognized Dick was evident, for there was an angry glare in his eyes that proved this.

Bob quickly bound the man's arms together behind his back, and then Dick dexterously gagged him.

This done, they lifted the helpless Tory and carried him out of the room, along the hall, and to the window, where they poked him out as if he were a bag of oats or corn, and the three youths outside lifted him to the ground.

Then Dick and Bob followed, and the five walked away, leading the prisoner.

They paused at the stable long enough to bridle and saddle a horse and lead him out of the stable, and then they placed the prisoner in the saddle, and made their way down to the foot of the hill, where the rest of the youths were in waiting.

Ten minutes later the entire party was riding away toward the north.

They had succeeded in doing a most difficult and daring thing. They had taken a prisoner and carried him away from a house in the upper rooms of which one hundred British troopers lay sleeping.

They arrived at the Saunders home just as the family was sitting down to breakfast, and Mrs. Saunders and Emma hustled around and cooked breakfast for the ten youths and their prisoner.

Mr. Saunders said that he would see that the neighbor's horses were taken home, and so Dick and his com-

panions set out afoot, with the prisoner in their midst, and were soon down at the river.

They got in the boat and rowed across the stream, and fifteen minutes later were in the fort, and had conducted the prisoner to the headquarters building and into the presence of General Arnold.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRAITOR MEETS THE BRITISH MESSENGER.

"Well, Dick, you succeeded, I see," said Arnold.

"Yes, sir; here is the prisoner."

"Very good; you may leave us alone. I wish to ask him some questions."

Dick and Bob—who had come with him—bowed and withdrew.

General Arnold went toward the door and fastened it, and then turned toward the prisoner.

"You sent those fellows to make a prisoner of me, General Arnold?" the Tory said.

"I did."

"Why did you do it?"

"I'll tell you. Captain Slater told me that he had seen you down in New York City, and I wished to have an interview with you and earn what action General Clinton is going to take in that matter—you know what I have reference to; and so I decided to send Dick Slater over and have him bring you here a prisoner, as this would disarm suspicion."

"Ah, then I am to be permitted to go free?"

"You will be permitted to escape," significantly.

"I understand. Well, that is all right, then. But I was feeling anything but good, I assure you."

"I don't doubt it. And now, what did you learn down in the city?"

"General Clinton is going to send a representative up here to meet and confer with you relative to—the matter at issue."

"Indeed! Who is to come?"

"I think the messenger is to be a young officer by the name of Anderson."

"And do you know when he is to come?"

"Yes, the day after to-morrow."

"Ah, indeed! And how will he come?"

"Up the river on a sloop-of-war."

"But he cannot come near West Point. The guns would be turned on the vessel."

"True; the ship will stop at a point some fifteen miles down the stream, and Anderson will make a landing there."

"Good! I will be there!"

They conversed quite awhile, and then Arnold summoned his orderly and ordered that the prisoner be taken and placed under guard.

This was done, and then Arnold, left alone, rose and

paced the floor, his hands clasped tightly behind his back, his eyes on the floor, a frown on his face.

It was evident that his thoughts were not pleasant ones.

"Shall I, or shall I not?" he asked himself.

He paused and looked out of the window and across toward a large house which stood on an eminence on the opposite side of the river. This was the home of a loyalist by the name of Beverly Robinson, whose house had been confiscated, and where Arnold had installed his wife and baby boy, he going over there every evening and returning in the morning.

He gazed at the house, shook his head, and resumed the work of pacing the floor.

Undoubtedly the struggle was a bitter one, but at last the officer snapped his fingers and muttered something in an angry tone.

"I'll do it!" he said, aloud; "yes, I have not been treated right by Congress, and I will revenge myself upon the members."

That night Samuel Fosdick, the Tory, succeeded in making his escape, and it was never known how he managed it. There can be little doubt, however, that General Arnold could have thrown some light on the subject had he wished to do so.

"We will go after him and recapture him," said Dick, when at General Arnold's quarters next morning, but the officer shook his head.

"Let him go," he said. "He is probably out of reach, anyway; and I discovered, on talking to him last night, that he has really taken no active part against the patriots. The officer he was with down in the city when you saw him was an old friend he had known in England."

"But he told the officer who I was and did his best to help capture me," said Dick.

"That may be; but he is beyond pursuit, so we will let him go."

On the 29th General Arnold mounted a horse and set out down the river. He said he would be gone that day, and for the soldiers to keep close watch for the coming of the British.

He did not volunteer any information regarding where he was going, and as he was the officer in command no one presumed to ask any questions.

He rode southward a distance of fifteen miles, and then paused and tied his horse in the midst of a clump of trees near the bank of the river. Then he took up his position where he could look far down the stream.

"I wish the ship would come in sight," he said to himself, after he had been there an hour, watching in vain for the coming of the expected sloop of war—for it may as well be stated that Arnold had made up his mind to turn traitor, and had come down here to meet the messenger from General Clinton.

At last he saw a vessel coming up the river.

He watched it eagerly, and when it came opposite the point where he stood the vessel dropped anchor.

Arnold knew it was a British ship, though no flag was flying, and he doubted not that the messenger John Anderson was on board.

All was quiet on the ship during the rest of the afternoon, and Arnold kept back out of sight and waited as patiently as possible.

At last darkness settled over all, and presently the would-be traitor heard the sound of oars.

A little later he heard the sound of a boat keel grating on the sandy beach, and he walked out and found himself confronted by a young man who had just come ashore from the boat.

"Who are you, sir?" the young stranger asked.

"My name is Gustavus," was the reply; "and yours?"

"Is John Anderson."

"Very good, Mr. Anderson; come with me."

The young man turned and spoke to the men in the boat.

"Wait here until I return," he said.

"Very well, sir," was the reply.

Then John Anderson turned and followed General Arnold up into the midst of a thick clump of trees, where they took seats on a blanket spread on the ground.

The two at once began their negotiations. Arnold, having made up his mind to become a traitor to his country, agreed to the terms proposed by the representative of General Clinton.

He agreed to take up the mammoth chain that was stretched across the river, and, under pretense of fixing it, would take out a link and put in a piece of rope instead, that would break when struck by a ship. In this way the British warships could ascend far enough to be in a position to bombard the fort at West Point.

They had so much to talk about that daylight caught them with their interview still unfinished, and when John Anderson went down to the boat the men refused to row out to the ship, they being afraid they would be seen and fired upon from the batteries at either side of the river.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! John Anderson—who was no other man than Major Andre, of course—and General Arnold hardly knew what to do.

They finally decided to walk up the river a couple of miles to the home of a Tory by the name of Joshua Smith, and finish their interview.

They did this, and after having eaten breakfast, went to an upstairs room and talked of the matter that had brought them together.

They decided that they might as well take their time, discuss the matter thoroughly, come to a full understanding, and then when night should come again they could go back down the river, and John Anderson could go aboard the ship and sail back down to New York in safety.

Suddenly, however, they heard the booming of guns.

"What does that mean?" exclaimed Arnold.

The British officer rushed to the window and looked out and down the river.

"The rebels have opened fire on the sloop of war from the works on the other side of the river!" he cried.

Arnold joined him at the window and looked out.

"The ship is sailing back down the river!" he exclaimed.

"True!" was the groaning reply; "and I am left behind! What shall I do?"

CHAPTER IX.

"THE DIE IS CAST."

Dick and Bob had been down the river a couple of miles watching for the coming of the British ships, when they caught sight of the sloop of war, Vulture, the vessel that brought Major Andre up for the interview with General Arnold.

They saw the ship lie to and drop anchor, and were greatly interested.

"I wonder why it has come up the river alone, Dick?" said Bob.

"That is a question I can't answer, Bob."

"If there were a number of ships, then we could understand the matter; but I don't see why one little sloop of war should come up here."

"Nor I, Bob."

They watched the vessel closely, but saw no boat put off from it, nor was there any stir on the ship itself, so far as they could make out.

As evening drew near they made their way back to West Point, and Dick went to headquarters to report to General Arnold.

The officer was not at headquarters.

"Ah, he has gone across to the house for the night, I suppose," he said to himself.

He asked the orderly if this was the case, and that worthy said no; that General Arnold had not returned as yet from his trip down the river.

"That is rather strange," thought Dick. "I am afraid he has been captured."

He went back and told the Liberty Boys about the matter.

"It is more than likely that he is watching the British ship, Dick," said Mark Morrison. "I don't think there is any danger that he has been captured."

Dick was not so sure about this, however.

He was uneasy, and so he named five of the Liberty Boys and told them to get ready to go down the river in search of Arnold.

It did not take the youths long to get ready.

Then they set out and made their way slowly southward along what was known as the river road.

This was the road General Arnold had traveled, as Dick knew.

It was quite dark, so they did not travel fast.

They did not wish to hurry, however.

They wanted to go slowly, and keep a close watch for Arnold, or for some signs of him.

They rode three or four hours, and then, feeling sure that they must be in the vicinity of the point where the British sloop of war was lying, they stopped and tied their horses to trees.

Then they went down to the point where the battery was located and, passing the sentinel on being challenged, entered the work and had an interview with the commander.

He said that Arnold had not been at the works that day.

He had not known that the commander of West Point had been down that way, until told so by Dick.

Like Dick, he was somewhat uneasy.

"The general may have been captured by some of the cowboys or skinners who infest the roads in this vicinity," he said.

"That is what I am afraid of," said Dick.

Then Dick asked the commander of the works what he thought of the matter of the appearance of the British ship.

"I don't understand it," he replied. "If it is here in the morning, and I can make up my mind that it is within range, then I will try a few shots at it."

"Was that the reason you did not fire at it yesterday afternoon—you thought it was out of range?"

"Yes."

Dick and the Liberty Boys decided to remain at the works the rest of the night.

"We will want to be here in the morning," said Dick. "We must find Arnold, if possible, and then we would like to try our hands at firing at the British ship. Will you let us have one of the guns to handle as we wish to, sir?"

"Certainly, Captain Slater," was the reply. "I know you Liberty Boys are good gunners, and I will be only too glad to let you try your hands."

"Thank you."

The youths felt sure their horses would be safe, tied in the depths of the timber, so they did not go back to look after the animals, but threw themselves down on blankets spread within the works, and were soon sound asleep.

They were up bright and early next morning.

They waited until it was light, for they wanted to see if the British warship was still in sight; and when it grew light enough so they could see, sure enough, there the vessel was.

They ate their breakfast and then left the works and went to where they had left their horses.

The animals were there, and then the Liberty Boys made a trip to a farmhouse not far distant, and asked if a patriot officer had been there the day before.

They received a reply in the negative and, disappointed and wondering, they made their way back to the works.

"Did you hear anything of General Arnold?" the commander asked.

"Not a thing," said Dick.

"Well, what are you going to do now? Do you wish to try your hand at firing on the British sloop of war?"

"Yes."

"Very good; select your gun and go to work."

Dick specified the gun that he would like to use, and then the commander ordered it to be loaded.

Some of the gunners hastened to load the piece.

"Now try your luck," said the commander, with a smile. "Let us see if you can hit the ship."

Dick sighted the gun, and then held the match to the touch-hole.

Boom! went the weapon, and a yardarm was severed by the ball and fell to the deck of the ship with a crash, knocking down several of the redcoats.

A cheer went up from the soldiers in the works.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob; "we beat the gunners on the other side of the river, anyway."

There had been two shots fired at the British ship from the works on the river before Dick fired his shot, but neither of the two shots had done any damage.

The gunner there was not so good at the work as was Dick.

"You are a splendid gunner, Captain Slater," said the commander of the works.

"Oh, that was just an accident," smiled Dick.

"There was no accident about it," said Bob; "you are a good gunner, Dick, and you know it."

"Yes, but that was a difficult shot to make intentionally, Bob; I am inclined to think that it was an accident that I hit anything, when the distance is taken into consideration."

"Try it again!" said Mark Morrison.

"Look!" cried Bob. "The ship is moving! It is getting under way!"

"Yes; it is heading down the river!" said Sam Sanderon.

"That shot of yours rather scared the British, I think, Captain Slater," said the commander of the works.

"Hurry!" said Dick; "I want to get another shot at them before they get out of range!"

The cannon was soon loaded, and the gunners stepped back to give Dick a chance to take aim.

He sighted the piece again, and then touched it off. **Boom-m-m-m-m-m-m!**

The report roared out loudly and echoed and reverberated among the hills and ravines, and one of the sails of the British ship was seen to be torn from its fastenings and fall downward, flapping and useless.

"Hurrah! Another good shot!" cried Bob. "Keep on at the good work, Dick!"

"The ship will be out of range before the gun can be reloaded, I think," was the reply.

The gunners hastened to reload the weapon, and then Dick sighted and fired again, but the shot fell short. The ship was out of range.

"Well, we did them a little damage, anyhow," said Bob Estabrook.

Then they discussed the matter of the presence of the ship, but could not come to any decision regarding it.

After they had finished discussing the matter Dick said he and his comrades must be going.

"We will take a trip around in the vicinity and try to get some news of General Arnold," he said.

They bade the commander good-by and took their departure.

When they reached the spot where the horses had been left the animals were found there, safe and sound, and the youths at once mounted and rode away.

They put in the forenoon, and rode in all directions making inquiries, but could not get any news of General Arnold.

They ate dinner at the home of a patriot, and then mounted and galloped back toward West Point, which place they reached two hours later.

Here they were told that General Arnold was back.

"When did he come?" asked Dick.

"He got here awhile before noon," replied one of the Liberty Boys.

"Well, I am glad that he got back safely," said Dick.

"And so am I," from Bob; "I wonder where he was, anyhow?"

Of course no one knew this.

Dick was summoned to headquarters a little later by Arnold's orderly.

He went at once.

"Well, Dick, I hear that you and some of your Liberty Boys had fears for my safety, and were out looking for me," the general said, with a smile.

"Yes, General Arnold," replied Dick; "I trust that you are not displeased."

"Oh, no; but you must remember, my boy, that I am, like yourself, one who may always be depended upon to take care of himself, and in the future don't worry about me. I will always come through all right."

After some further discussion Dick withdrew and went back to the Liberty Boys' quarters.

When Dick was gone General Arnold rose and walked the floor. He frowned, and was evidently not feeling at all happy.

"Sometimes I wish I had not done it," he said to himself. "I almost wish I had never entered into negotiations with General Clinton."

He paced the floor for a long time, and it was evident that there was a great struggle going on within his breast.

At last he shook his head and set his teeth.

"Major Andre has a number of papers that would prove my treason if they fell into the hands of General Wash-

ington," he said to himself; "so I cannot see that there is any chance for me to draw back. No; I must go on in the way I have started. There can be no turning back now. The die is cast!"

CHAPTER X.

ARNOLD FLEES.

On the morning of the 25th of September General Arnold, his wife and a number of officers were seated at breakfast in the spacious dining room of the Beverly Robinson house.

General Hamilton had arrived with some other officers only a short time before, and had brought the news that General Washington, with Lafayette and Knox, would soon be there. The commander-in-chief had returned from Hartford, where he had gone to hold an interview with Rochambeau, sooner than he had expected.

They had just begun eating when a messenger entered and handed a letter to General Arnold.

He took the letter and opened it, all unsuspicous of the momentous nature of its contents.

The letter was from Colonel Jameson, who was in charge of a force of patriots over toward Tarrytown, and in a few words it informed Arnold that his treason had been, or soon would be discovered, for it stated that one John Anderson had been captured near Tarrytown with compromising documents in his possession. These documents, the letter went on to state, had been forwarded to the commander-in-chief.

This was a terrible blow to General Arnold.

He realized that he was sitting over a powder magazine that might at any moment explode and destroy him.

Washington might even now have the documents in his possession, and as said documents were all in Arnold's well known handwriting the evidence could not be other than conclusive, and he would be seized and made prisoner, to be later shot as a traitor, or perhaps hanged.

His only chance for life was in fleeing at once.

He must not wait till the commander-in-chief arrived. All this flashed through the keen brain of Arnold practically in an instant.

Arnold was brave, there can never be any question regarding that. He certainly proved himself to be possessed of a nerve of iron on this occasion, for while he read what meant ruin to him, there in the letter, with the eyes of his wife and the officers upon him, yet he did not betray any signs of agitation—at least none that were visible to the eyes of the officers. The keen eyes of the wife, however, detected that something was amiss, though she did not have any suspicion regarding what it might be, for Arnold had not made her his confidant in the matter of turning traitor. Had he done so, he might never have become a traitor.

Folding the letter, Arnold placed it in his pocket, remarked calmly that a matter of some importance called him across the river to West Point, but that he would return as quickly as possible and meet the commander-in-chief, he rose and excused himself and left the room, first telling his orderly to see to it that his barge was manned at once, so that he could be rowed across the river.

His wife excused herself and followed Arnold from the room.

"What is it, husband?" she asked, when they were in the hallway.

"Come upstairs to our bedroom, my dear," was the reply; "then I will tell you, but not here."

Mrs. Arnold paled, for there was something in her husband's tone and looks that warned her that a terrible trouble was upon them.

The instant they were in the room she threw her arms around her husband's neck and asked, tremblingly:

"What is it, husband?"

"Wife," said Arnold, his own voice trembling in spite of the iron will that was forcing it to be steady, "I am a ruined man!"

"What do you mean?" she gasped. "Oh, husband, tell me all, and at once! I must know the worst!"

Then he told her briefly what he had done, that he had turned traitor, and that the proofs of his treason were even then, or would be soon, in the hands of the commander-in-chief.

"I must fly for my life!" he said in conclusion.

The horror of it all seemed to come to his wife all of a sudden, and she screamed and fainted in his arms.

He placed the insensible woman on the bed, summoned the maid, kissed his wife and baby boy, asleep on the crib, and then left the room and the house.

He leaped into the saddle, a horse having been brought to take him to his barge, and then he galloped away and was soon at the river.

While riding along he had been thinking swiftly.

What was he to do?

Suddenly he thought of the sloop of war *Vulture*, the British vessel on which Major Andre had come up the river.

He was sure the ship must still be waiting with the expectation that Andre would return, for the commander of the vessel had been ordered to do so.

"If I can reach that vessel I will be safe," thought Arnold.

He made up his mind to make the attempt.

It was indeed the only thing that he could do that promised anything in the way of success.

He leaped off the horse, entered the boat, and told the oarsmen to pull down the river.

Of course the only thing they could do was to obey. It was possible, even probable, that they wondered why the general was going down the river when the orderly had told them that he was going across the river to West Point, but it was no business of theirs.

They bent to the oars, and rowed downstream at a good speed.

"Five, ten, fifteen miles were gone over, and then, on rounding a bend in the stream a sloop of war came in sight.

It was the Vulture, as Arnold knew at a glance. His heart thrilled with joy.

He was to escape after all.

The man at the tiller looked at Arnold, and said: "That's a British vessel, isn't it, General Arnold?"

"Yes," was the calm, cold reply.

"And are we to go near it?" in a tone of fear.

"You will put the boat alongside," coolly.

"But—"

"There are no 'buts' about it. You will do as I say. I have business to transact with the commander of that vessel."

The man said no more, but it was evident that he and his comrades did not know what to think. They were pretty thoroughly frightened, too.

Presently they brought the boat to alongside the British vessel, and when the rope ladder was dropped Arnold went aboard.

"You may return with the boat, Renfro," said the traitor, looking down at the men from the sloop of war's rail; "I will not be going back until to-morrow."

Without a word the men bent to the oars, and turning the boat's head, rowed back up the river.

When they were out of earshot of the men on the deck of the British ship they discussed the strange affair wonderingly.

"I don't understand it," said the steersman. "I must say that if it were anybody else but General Arnold I would think he were going over to the British."

"That's what I would think, too," from another; "but surely General Arnold, the 'fighting general,' would not do anything of the kind!"

"No; I think not. He must have some business with the commander of the British ship, and they are going to transact it under a flag of truce."

Meanwhile what of General Arnold?

The commander of the ship was not personally acquainted with Arnold, but he knew that the newcomer was a patriot officer of rank, and so at once advanced and inquired to what he owed the pleasure of the visit.

"I am General Arnold," was the reply. "I am the man whom your Major Andre came up here to meet. He has been captured with papers in his possession that incriminate me, so I had to flee for my life. I claim the protection of the British flag, sir."

"Very well, General Arnold; it shall be extended to you."

Then he shook his head sadly.

"So Major Andre has been captured," he remarked; "too bad! He was a brave, handsome and noble-hearted young officer. I am sorry, very sorry!"

"And so am I," said Arnold. Then a thought struck him, and he signaled to the men in the boat to return.

They turned about and returned, wondering what was up now.

"Perhaps the general has finished his business and is going back right away," said the man at the tiller.

When they came alongside the ship, however, Arnold told them to wait, that he was going to write a short letter to the commander-in-chief, and wished them to take it back with them and deliver it.

He went to the cabin, was given paper, quill and ink, and sitting down, he wrote a short letter to General Washington.

He told the commander-in-chief that Mrs. Arnold was wholly innocent of any complicity in the unfortunate affair, that she had known nothing about it until he told her that morning just before fleeing, and implored him to either permit her to return to her folks in Philadelphia, or to come to him (Arnold) in New York, as she might elect.

Having written this letter, he sealed it and took it out to the rail and dropped it to the men in the boat.

"Deliver that to the commander-in-chief as soon as you arrive at headquarters, without fail," Arnold said, impressively. "It is very important."

"We will do so, sir," was the reply, and then they rowed away up the stream.

The ship got under way at once, also, and sailed down the Hudson.

When it came opposite to the lower end of the city of New York the ship dropped anchor, and General Arnold was sent ashore in a boat.

A couple of officers were with him, and they conducted him to Fraunce's tavern, which was being used as headquarters by General Clinton.

Arnold was conducted to the general's private room at once, and was introduced to the British commander-in-chief by one of the officers.

"What is that? You are General Arnold whom Major Andre went up the river to meet and confer with?" cried the general. "And where, then, is the major?"

"He has been captured, sir," replied Arnold.

"Captured, you say?" There was a look of deep sorrow on the general's face.

"Yes, sir; he was captured, I learn, not far from Tarrytown."

"But why was he on land? Why did he not return aboard the sloop, the same way he went?"

"The vessel was fired upon from the works on both sides of the river, sir, and the commander dropped down the river to get out of danger. Andre did not know whether the ship would return, I suppose, and so he started to return to the city overland, on horseback."

"And why are you here, General Arnold? Did you deem it necessary; surely Major Andre did not have any papers in his possession that—"

Arnold bowed.

"Yes; he had a number of documents in my handwriting, and so I was forced to flee for my life."

"Too bad! I am sorry for you, General Arnold, and doubly sorry for Major Andre, who was as fine a young fellow as ever drew his sword for the king."

"I liked his appearance very much," said Arnold.

"He made a mistake," said General Clinton. "I told him to be sure and not disguise himself or accept any papers of any kind, for I was afraid he might be captured and the papers might fall into the hands of the rebels. Well, it can't be helped now. I will enter into negotiations with the commander-in-chief of the rebel army and try to secure the major's release."

Arnold shook his head.

"I fear you cannot secure his release," he said; "unless, indeed, you would tell him that you will—give me in exchange."

General Clinton's lips curled in scorn.

"I am an officer and a gentleman," he said; "and I would not be guilty of such an act. Major Andre is unfortunate, and his life will no doubt pay the forfeit; but I could not and would not turn you over to certain death to save my own agent. You are safe, sir—safe under the protection of the British flag."

"Thank you," said Arnold, drawing a long breath of relief.

The truth was, that he had been assailed by the fear that the British commander-in-chief might offer to give him up to Washington in exchange for Major Andre, and the thought had worried him greatly.

Now, however, he felt better. He realized that he was safe.

But he was far from feeling happy.

He was a traitor, and—he felt like one.

CHAPTER XI.

WASHINGTON LEARNS THE TRUTH.

When General Washington, accompanied by Lafayette and Knox, arrived at the Beverly Robinson house that morning he found that all had breakfasted; so the three sat down and ate.

He was told that General Arnold had been called across to West Point, and, not having learned that Mrs. Arnold was in hysterics—the nursemaid having been cautioned by Arnold to keep the matter quiet, before he left—he suspected nothing, and, accompanied by all the members of his suite, save Hamilton, went across the river.

No salute was fired from the guns as they crossed the river, and this surprised the commander-in-chief and the other officers not a little.

"It must be that they have not seen us," said Knox; "though I don't see how they can have failed to do so."

They landed and hastened up the slope and were soon within the works.

The first person they encountered, after passing the sentinels, was Dick Slater.

Dick saluted, and the commander-in-chief asked:

"Is General Arnold in the headquarters building, Captain Slater?"

Dick looked surprised.

"He is not here, sir," he replied; "he did not come over this morning."

"He did not?" in surprise.

"No, sir."

"Why, he left the house more than an hour ago and ordered his barge manned, stating that he was coming over here."

"He did not come, sir."

The commander-in-chief looked puzzled, as did his companions also.

"That is strange," he said.

"I saw a boat go down the river more than an hour ago, sir," said Dick; "possibly that was General Arnold's barge."

"Quite likely; he has gone down the river to inspect the water batteries at the ends of the great chain, likely."

General Washington and his staff remained at West Point till nearly noon, and then went back to the Beverly Robinson house.

As they approached the house they were met by Alexander Hamilton, who acted in the capacity of private secretary to the commander-in-chief. He seemed somewhat agitated, and said to the general:

"I wish to see you in private, your excellency, and at once."

The commander-in-chief excused himself to the officers of his staff, and went into the house and to the library with Hamilton.

"General Washington," said Hamilton, in a very sober and impressive manner, "I fear that I must, in discharging my duties as your secretary, give you a great shock."

"What is it?" the great man asked. "Tell me quickly."

"I will do so, sir; I have every reason to believe that General Arnold is a traitor!"

"What is that? General Arnold a traitor? Impossible, my dear Hamilton! Impossible!"

Hamilton shook his head slowly.

"So I would say, were it not that I had been confronted with the truth, sir," he said, slowly.

"The proof? Then show me the proof and I will believe it, and not before!"

"Here it is, sir," and the secretary handed the commander-in-chief some papers.

General Washington looked at the documents—one of which was a diagram showing the defenses of West Point—all in the well known handwriting of Arnold, and then he looked at Hamilton with a face that was pale and set.

"Where did these papers come from?" he asked.

"From Colonel Jameson, sir; here is the letter he sent with them. He has captured a British spy, one John Anderson—likely a fictitious name—and these other documents were found on the spy's person—or, rather, between his feet and the soles of his shoes."

"Then Arnold is a traitor!" almost groaned General Washington. "Hamilton, I would never have believed that such a thing could be possible."

"It was a great shock to me, sir, and I knew it would be a great shock to you."

"Yes, indeed; I loved Arnold almost as a son, and this has well-nigh broken my heart."

He left the house with the remark that he must have some fresh air, and when he encountered Lafayette, Knox and the rest on the lawn he exclaimed, in a voice which trembled with emotion:

"Arnold is a traitor and has fled to the British! Whom can we trust now?"

The officers were startled and amazed.

They stared at the commander-in-chief in bewildered silence.

"Can it be possible!" gasped General Knox.

"Yes, it is only too true!" said General Washington. "Colonel Jameson has captured a British officer who had some treasonous documents in the handwriting of Arnold; and as we know, Arnold has mysteriously disappeared, which makes the proof absolute against him."

"True; well, it is bad, very bad!" said Knox.

"Yes, indeed," from Lafayette. "But perhaps you may be able to catch the fugitive, General Washington."

"I fear not; the chances are that he has gone down the river and taken refuge on board the ship that brought the British spy up from New York."

Even as the commander-in-chief finished speaking a soldier was seen approaching. He paused in front of General Washington, saluted, and then held out a letter.

"General Arnold said I was to hand this to you, sir," the soldier said.

Washington seized the letter and broke the seal, at the same time asking:

"Where was General Arnold when you last saw him, my man?"

"On board that British ship, about twenty miles down the river, sir."

The commander-in-chief nodded and then read the contents of the letter.

"Yes," he said, sadly; "Arnold confesses that he is a traitor, but says his wife had no knowledge whatever regarding the matter until he told her this morning; and he implores me to permit her to go to her relatives in Philadelphia or to come to him in New York."

"I am glad that she knew nothing of it," said General Knox.

"How sorry I am for the poor woman," said Lafayette; "it is a terrible blow for her."

"Yes, indeed," said General Washington. Then he turned to Hamilton, who had followed him from the house.

"Go to Mrs. Arnold," he said, "and tell her that though my duty required that no means should be neglected to capture General Arnold, consideration for her peace of mind leads me to say that I am happy to inform her that her husband is now safe on board a British vessel."

Hamilton bowed, and entered the house.

He went upstairs, and was told that Mrs. Arnold had recovered from her hysterics and was now in a condition to talk to him.

He entered the chamber and told the unhappy woman what Washington had said, and she burst into tears, and murmured: "Heaven be thanked!" Then she added, in a voice which betrayed how greatly she had suffered: "Oh, my poor husband!"

Alexander Hamilton offered such words of consolation as he could think of, and then asked:

"Which do you wish to do, Mrs. Arnold?—go to Philadelphia or New York?"

"To New York," was the reply. "I will go to my husband."

"Very well," was the reply. "Arrangements will be made to provide the means of your going there whenever you wish to go."

"I wish to go just as soon as possible, Mr. Hamilton," was the sad reply. "I have no wish to remain here a minute longer than is necessary. You will understand how painful it must be to me to be here while my husband is in New York alone."

Alexander Hamilton bowed and withdrew, and when he rejoined the commander-in-chief downstairs he told him what Mrs. Arnold had said.

"Very good," said Washington. "I will send her down to the city by boat. It will give us an opportunity to make an attempt to secure some information regarding the intentions of the British. But first we must go across to West Point and see what has been done there that would be of detriment to us in case the British should come up the river."

"Yes; that is something that should be looked into at once," agreed Hamilton.

The other officers concurred in his view of the matter.

"Then come with me," said Washington. "We will go over and make a careful examination of the works and defenses."

They went down to the river, got into the barge, and were rowed across the stream.

They ascended to the works, and then the task of making a careful examination was begun.

It was soon apparent that the traitor, Arnold, had arranged things so that the patriots would have been unable to do much in the way of making a defense had the British come up the river and made an attack. By evening, however, everything had been arranged to the satisfaction of the commander-in-chief, and he felt that in case the British were indeed coming up the river to make an attack they would be given a warm reception."

When he had attended to this work he sent for Dick Slater.

"I have some work for you, my boy," he said, when Dick put in an appearance.

CHAPTER XII.

DICK AND BOB IN NEW YORK.

"What is the work, sir?" asked Dick.

"It is this: Arnold is by this time in New York City. I want that you shall go there and spy on him."

"Very well, sir."

"I want that you shall find where he is staying, and see if there will be any possible chance of capturing him and bringing him away from the city."

Dick's eyes brightened.

"I shall be only too glad to make the attempt to do this work, sir," he said.

"So I thought; when will you start, my boy?"

"Right away, sir."

"How will you go?"

"By boat, I believe."

"That will be the safest and best, likely."

"I think so."

The commander-in-chief gave Dick some further instructions, and the youth went to the quarters occupied by the Liberty Boys and began getting ready for the trip down the river, while Washington and the members of his staff went back across the river to the Beverly Robinson house.

"What are you going do, Dick?" asked Bob, who saw his comrade was making preparations to go somewhere.

"I am going down to the city, Bob."

"To New York?"

"Yes."

"What for?" eagerly.

"To spy on Arnold."

"And I suppose you are figuring on going all alone?" Dick smiled.

"Well, I haven't said so," he remarked.

"Then you are not going alone! Good! I am going with you, old man!"

"I guess I will take you along, Bob. I will need your help in coming back."

"And why not in going, as well?"

"We will have the current with us, going."

"Ah, I see; we are going down in a boat."

"Exactly."

"That is a good scheme, I think."

"Why?"

"Well, it will permit us to get right down almost into the heart of the city without being discovered or challenged by sentinels."

"True; all we will have to do will be to keep well out

from shore till we are opposite the point where we wish to land."

"That's it; and then we can crawl in toward the shore slowly and be very careful. In that way we ought to be able to make a landing in safety."

"We will try it, at any rate."

Bob began making preparations now, and it was plain that he was delighted.

"Say, let me go, too, Dick," said Mark Morrison.

"Und you vos petter led me go, Tick," said Carl Gookenspieler, the Dutch Liberty Boy.

"Oh, phwat's dhe matter wid yez, Cookyspiller?" said Patsy Brannigan in supreme scorn. "Shure an' dhe only ting yez could do would be to load down dhe boat. Yez would be no good fur innythin' else, begorra."

"I would be shoost so much good as vat you vould be, Batsy Prannigan."

"Neither of you would help us," said Bob; "so shut up. You are not going along."

"Shure an' thot settlhes it, Cookyspiller," said Patsy; "yez are not goin', d'ye moind that?"

Dick and Bob were ready before supper time, and when they had eaten they bade their comrades good-by and went down to the river and got in the boat and pushed off.

Bob took the oars, while Dick sat in the stern and guided the boat.

It was not yet dark, so they were in no hurry. They did not care about getting many miles down the stream before nightfall, for they might be seen by the British.

Bob pulled listlessly at the oars, and onward glided the boat.

It was not yet dark, so they were in no hurry. They did not care about getting many miles down the stream before nightfall, for they might be seen by the British.

Bob pulled listlessly at the oars, and onward glided the boat.

They had gone about ten miles by the time darkness settled over all, and then Bob began rowing in earnest.

"I guess we are safe from observation now," said Bob; "so we might as well travel at a livelier rate."

"Yes," agreed Dick; "I don't care how early we get to the city, now that it is dark."

It was about ten o'clock when they came opposite the city.

Bob backed water and asked Dick if it were not time to go ashore.

"I guess so, Bob; but go slowly, and be very careful."

"I will."

Bob headed the boat in toward the shore, and rowed slowly and carefully.

Up from the edge of the river a ways there were street lamps, but they were not near enough to illuminate the river front. Down at the edge of the water all was darkness.

Slowly the boat crept along.

Bob was very careful, and did not make a bit of noise with the oars.

Closer and closer to the shore drew the boat.

At last Bob ceased rowing and backed water gently.

Then of a sudden the boat's prow struck the sandy shore.

The boat had been moving so slowly that the jar was scarcely felt, however, and the youths sat perfectly still and listened intently for at least two minutes.

Not a sound did they hear, save a distant rumble, as of vehicles on a hard street.

"I guess we have not been heard," whispered Dick; "let's get out."

"All right," whispered Bob, and then he shipped the oars, being careful not to let them rattle or knock against the sides of the boat. This done, he got up and carefully stepped ashore, and Dick followed.

They pulled the boat up out of the water and felt around till they found the corner post of an old, unused wharf, and to this they tied the painter.

"Now come along, Bob," whispered Dick; "but as you value your liberty don't make any noise!"

"I'll be careful, old man."

They moved up the bank, and were soon at the top of it.

Here they paused and waited and listened. They knew there must be sentinels along the river front.

Sure enough, they heard the measured tread of a sentinel almost immediately.

"Lie down and keep perfectly quiet!" whispered Dick.

X "He will pass near us."

They lay down and remained quiet, and the sentinel walked past within three yards of them without so much as suspecting that any one was there.

When the sentinel had passed and was twenty yards away the youths rose and stole across the fellow's beat and made their way into and up a street leading toward Broadway.

It was not far to Broadway, and they were soon on this street.

It was now half-past ten, but the street was thronged.

Citizens and soldiers, men and women, youths and maidens were promenading the street, and Dick and Bob took their place and moved along, watching and listening.

They wished to learn where Arnold had taken up quarters, if possible, and to this end they paused whenever they came upon a group of men talking, and listened to their conversation.

The Liberty Boys found that the main matter under discussion, in most instances, was the treason of General Arnold and the capture of Major Andre.

Of course great sorrow was expressed that the plot had failed and that Andre had been captured. The majority of the citizens in New York at that time were Tories, and those who were not were not saying anything, so there were no arguments. All were of the same opinion.

Dick and Bob listened to these conversations with interest.

They learned some things about the plot that they had

not suspected, and their hearts burned with anger against the traitor Arnold.

"He ought to be hung, Dick!" whispered Bob, as they walked on, after listening to the conversation of a group of Tories and redcoats.

"So he ought, Bob; but I can hardly reconcile myself to the thought that Arnold has proved to be a traitor. He was such a brave and dashing soldier that it is difficult to think of him other than true-hearted and patriotic."

"Yes, it is hard to realize it, Dick; but we know it to be a fact that he is a traitor, and I, for one, would like to see him hanged."

"I would like to know that he was hung, but would not like to see it done."

They ceased talking now and paused to listen to the conversation of another group.

It was merely a repetition of what they had already heard. The people all seemed to think alike.

"What do you think they will do with Major Andre?" asked one of the members of the group.

"I think he will be hanged," said another.

"Do you really?"

"Yes."

"Well, our people hanged Nathan Hale, a rebel spy, right here in this city, as you all remember, and now that the rebels have got hold of Andre they will serve him the same way."

"Jove, that will be bad! Andre is a fine fellow!"

"So was Nathan Hale, but our people hanged him."

"Humph! Are you a rebel?"

"No; but I am an honest man, and I hope a just one. What I have just said is the truth, and I am not ashamed of it. Nathan Hale was a fine young man."

Dick and Bob felt like patting this speaker on the back and telling him that he was all right. He was an honest and just man, even though he was a Tory.

"Well," said another of the group, "I hope that Andre will succeed in making his escape."

"So do I!" said the man who had spoken so boldly. "I hope that he will escape the death that is threatening him, but I am afraid he will not."

Suddenly one of the members of the group turned quickly. He was a British soldier, and as his face was turned toward Dick the youth recognized him.

He was no other than Frank Farrell, the redcoat with whom Dick had taken the walk the last time he was down in the city, when he had been seen and recognized by Mr. Fosdick.

The redcoat recognized Dick at the same instant and gave utterance to an exclamation.

"Dick Slater!" he cried.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YOUTHS MEET ARNOLD.

Few redcoats had not at that period heard of Dick Slater.

He had been in the patriot army more than four years,

and during that time he had done a wonderful amount of scouting and spying, and had indeed made himself so famous that he had been given the title of "The Champion Spy of the Revolution."

A price had been placed on his head three years before by General Howe, when he was commander-in-chief of the British army in America, and it was still standing.

Therefore when the British soldier uttered the name "Dick Slater," the attention of the other redcoats and Tories was attracted instantly.

They whirled and glared at Dick and Bob eagerly, excitedly.

Dick and Bob had been taken by surprise, for they were not expecting to encounter any one who knew either of them; but they were not the youths to let their surprise keep them from acting promptly.

They gave a quick glance around them.

They were near a cross street—it was Wall Street, in fact, and quick as a flash they darted away and bounded down this street.

"After them!" roared the redcoat who had recognized Dick; "they are rebel spys! After them, I say!"

Instantly the group divided up into its individual parts and down the street the members dashed in hot pursuit.

Dick and Bob were splendid runners, and so were enabled to gradually leave their pursuers behind.

The streets were so narrow and crooked that they had a good chance to twist and turn, and even double on their pursuers, if they liked, and presently they had succeeded in throwing the redcoats and Tories entirely off the track.

Having done this the youths made their way back up Broadway and resumed the work of listening to the conversation of various groups. Now, however, Dick was careful to keep his hat pulled well down over his eyes, so as to avoid being recognized in case he should be seen by any one else who knew him.

The news that a couple of rebel spies were in the city had spread rapidly, and the youths found that this was occupying the attention of the citizens and soldiers to almost as great an extent as was the Arnold-Andre affair.

Dick and Bob became fearful that they would be recognized a second time, and so decided that the best thing they could do would be to get off Broadway and keep out of sight.

They left Broadway and made their way down in the direction of British headquarters, which was at Fraunce's tavern, at the junction of Pearl and Broad streets.

They took up their station on the opposite side of the street in a dark doorway and watched British headquarters.

They hardly hoped to be able to learn anything of value by doing this; but it was about the best they could do under the circumstances.

Presently they were given cause to be glad they had come to this place.

The door of the tavern opened, and a man, accompanied by half a dozen British soldiers, came forth.

The youths recognized the man instantly.

It was Benedict Arnold, the traitor.

"There he is, Dick!" whispered Bob, his voice trembling.

"Yes, Bob."

"He is going to his quarters, old man."

"I judge so."

"We must follow."

"Yes."

"This gives us the chance we were looking for."

"So it does."

The traitor and his escort had now got half way up the block, and Dick and Bob left the doorway and walked slowly along, keeping about the same distance behind them.

The youths followed until they saw the traitor and his escort enter a house well up toward the Common—now called City Hall park.

They advanced and took a good look at the house, and at those all around it, so that they would have no difficulty in finding it again, and then they walked slowly away.

When they had gone a block they paused in a dark doorway and began discussing the situation.

They wondered if it would be possible for them to capture the traitor and carry him away. If they could do this it would be a great achievement. The trouble was that they did not see how they were to accomplish it.

They did not wish to do anything that night, and so they made their way to a small inn on a side street and entered and asked if they could secure a room for the night.

They were told that they could, and a little later they were in bed and asleep.

They were up early next morning, and when they had eaten breakfast they went out upon the street.

By keeping their hats well pulled down over their faces the youths thought that they would be able to avoid being recognized. Of course there was not much danger that Bob would be recognized, but with Dick it was different. There were quite a number of British officers and soldiers in New York who knew him by sight.

They picked up quite a good deal of information during the day and evening.

They learned that it was not the purpose of the British to go up the river and make an attack on West Point.

This had been contemplated, but the capture of Andre had caused the plan to be abandoned, as it was known that the patriots would be on their guard.

The main idea of the British commander-in-chief just at this time seemed to be the saving of Andre from the death that was threatening him.

This was a problem that seemed impossible of solution.

About nine o'clock that evening Dick and Bob were moving along Broadway, and suddenly Dick felt some one's hand fall heavily upon his shoulder.

He whirled, and found himself face to face with Benedict Arnold, the traitor. The latter had his hat pulled well down over his face, but both Dick and Bob recognized him instantly.

"Step into this doorway here, boys," said Arnold. "I wish to speak to you."

The Liberty Boys were so amazed that they accompanied Arnold into the doorway, where the shadows were thick enough to veil them from the gaze of passersby, without a word.

"I have been looking for you, Dick," said Arnold.

"You have?" said Dick. Bob did not speak.

"Yes; I wished to have a talk with you. I heard that you were in the city last night, and I made up my mind that you would remain a day or two. Now, I am not going to ask you boys to be charitable, and not judge me too harshly. I have made my bed, and am willing to lie on it; but I wish to ask a few questions, and if you will answer them I will be much obliged."

"Go ahead," said Dick, coldly. Now that he was standing by the traitor's side he realized the enormity of the man's crime, and a feeling of repulsion came over him.

"First," said Arnold, "I wish to ask how my wife is getting along."

"She was feeling pretty well when we left there," was the reply.

"I am glad to hear that; and now, Dick, do you know whether she intends joining me here in New York?"

"Yes; I heard General Washington say that your wife was to be sent here."

A sigh of relief escaped the lips of Arnold.

"You have lifted a great load from my heart," he said. "I wrote to General Washington to let her come here or go to Philadelphia, but I did not know which she would do."

Arnold asked Dick a number of questions, and as none of them had any political significance Dick did not hesitate to answer:

When Arnold had finished asking questions Dick said:

"Perhaps I ought not to ask you, General Arnold, but I would like to know very much why you—well, why you—"

"Out with it, Dick," said Arnold, in a rather bitter tone of voice; "don't be backward. You wish to know why I turned traitor."

"Yes," said Dick. "That is what I would like to know. I can hardly understand the matter."

Arnold was silent a few moments, and then said, slowly and sadly:

"There have been so many things which have contributed to bringing about my action, Dick, that it would be difficult to answer your question specifically. I will only say that if any one thing contributed more than another to the unfortunate affair, it was the action which Congress has always taken toward me. It has never treated me right, Dick."

"That is no excuse for your turning traitor and trying to ruin the cause for which we have all been laboring so hard and so long!" exclaimed Bob.

"True, Bob; you're right," said Arnold. "I have not

told you this as an excuse, but simply to answer the question which Dick asked."

They talked awhile longer, and then Dick said:

"How about it, General Arnold? Are you going to give the alarm and have us captured?"

"No, Dick; so far as I am concerned, you boys are free to leave the city. All that I ask is that in years to come, when you hear people speaking scathingly of the traitor, Arnold, you will occasionally tell these people that you do not believe that Arnold was all bad."

"Oh, we don't believe that," said Dick. "We know that the man who fought so bravely at Quebec and Saratoga and on many other battlefields for the glorious cause of liberty could not be all bad."

"Thank you, my boy."

Then, with a good-by, Arnold left their side and walked slowly down the street.

"Jove, Dick," said Bob; "if we could only have captured him and taken him away with us."

"That would have been absolutely impossible of accomplishment, Bob. He is here in New York among hundreds, yes thousands of friends, while we are only two, who are in danger of capture ourselves."

"True, Dick; but it seems hard to be standing right beside the traitor and yet not dare put hands on him."

"Yes; but we will have all we can do to get safely out of the city."

"I suppose so; are we going back to West Point tonight?"

"Yes; we have picked up about all the information possible, I think, and might as well be going."

"Let's go at once, old man. Arnold might change his mind and set the redcoats on to us."

"I don't think that he would do that; but we may as well be going, anyway."

"I don't think that he would do that; but we may as well be going, anyway."

They left their place in the doorway and moved down Broadway till they reached Cortlandt street. Here they turned and made their way toward the river.

They moved slowly along, and had almost reached the shore, when they were startled by the sharp challenge:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

CHAPTER XIV.

BACK AT WEST POINT.

The youths could not see the challenger, for he was between them and the river, and the background was one of intense blackness. But he could see them, because there was a light background made by the street lamps of the city.

Of course Dick and Bob knew that it would not do to permit themselves to be captured.

With Andre in the hands of the patriots, the fate of the two patriot spies, if caught, would be certain. Nothing would please General Clinton more than to get his hands on the famous Dick Slater right at this time. He would know that General Washington would almost be willing to exchange Andre for Dick.

All this flashed through Dick's mind in an instant, and he said to Bob, in a whisper:

"Follow me!"

Then he leaped away, followed by Bob.

The sound of the voice of the challenger had come from some place to the right and as well as in front, and so the two dashed diagonally away toward the left.

"Stop!" roared a stentorian voice; "stop, or I'll fire!"

Of course the youths did nothing of the kind.

They were ready to take the chances of being hit by a bullet, but were not ready to take their chances as prisoners in the hands of the commander-in-chief.

Crack!

They knew that they must get to their boat and away very quickly.

The river bank would soon be thronged with people, and if the two were still on shore they would be captured.

They were not sure that their boat was where they had left it.

They had walked down to the river that afternoon and had seen the boat lying right where they had left it the night before, but some one might have taken it since then.

They soon reached the point where the boat should be.

It was so dark they had to feel around to learn whether the boat was still there.

They found that it was.

"Good!" exclaimed Dick, in a low, intense voice of satisfaction; "push with all your might, Bob."

They shoved the boat off into the water and then leaped in, Bob seating himself and taking up the oars.

Dick took his place at the stern, and steered while Bob rowed.

They had not gone far when they heard the sound of footsteps, and dark shadows were seen moving along the shore, and voices were heard calling out excitedly.

The musket shot had brought a lot of people down to the shore, and the two Liberty Boys had not embarked an instant too soon.

"I guess we are going to get away safely, Dick," said Bob, cautiously, as he pulled with all his might.

"I guess so, Bob; but they may get a boat and come in pursuit."

"They won't be able to see us, if they do."

"True."

Just then a voice was heard on the shore.

"They have taken to a boat!" were the words uttered. "We must get a boat and go in pursuit!"

"Hear that, Dick?"

"Yes, Bob."

"They are going to try to follow us."

Bob rowed hard for ten or fifteen minutes, and then Dick asked to be permitted to row awhile.

"You must be tired, Bob," he said.

"Not much; I'll row awhile longer, Dick."

He kept on ten or fifteen minutes longer, and then Dick took the oars, while Bob seated himself at the stern and rested.

Dick was a good oarsman, and forced the boat through the water at a goodly rate of speed.

They did not hear anything from their pursuers, so judged that the redcoats had speedily got enough of it and turned back.

"Say, Dick, what are we going to do?" asked Bob.

"What do you mean, Bob?"

"Why, we can't row all the way to West Point against the current."

"True; I'll tell you what I was thinking of doing, Bob."

"What?"

"I was thinking that we would go ashore after we had gone up past the north end of the island, and get a couple of horses at the home of a patriot and ride to West Point."

"That is just what I was thinking of, old man."

"Very well; we will do it."

"It will beat trying to row up there against the current."

"So it will."

They toiled onward until they were about opposite the end of Manhattan Island, and then they headed toward the east shore.

They made a landing at last, and tying the boat to a tree, walked up the slope and headed eastward and northward through the timber.

They had never been just at this place before, but they had a good general knowledge of which way to go, and did not anticipate having much trouble in finding the main road and the home of a patriot, where they would be furnished with horses.

They stumbled along through the timber and darkness for half an hour without striking the road, and began to think that they were not going to find one at all.

At last they came to the road, however, and with a sigh of satisfaction they turned to the left and walked in a northerly direction.

They continued onward until they came to a house, and they entered the yard and knocked on the door. There was no light in the house, and it was evident that the people were in bed.

It took three or four knockings to bring any one, and then the door was opened and a man stood there, holding a tallow candle in his hand.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he asked.

"What are you, patriot or loyalist?" asked Dick.

"Well," he said, "I can't say that I am either."

Dick and Bob laughed.

"You are neutral, eh?" said the former.

"Yes."

"Well, that makes you safe. We are patriots, and we want to borrow a couple of horses to ride to West Point on."

"You can have them; but how will I get them back?"
"We will send them back in a day or two."

"Very well; who are you?"

Dick told him.

"I've heard of you, Captain Slater. You are welcome to the horses. You might take them whether I consent or not; so I may as well lend them to you and risk the luck of getting them back."

The man went out to the stable with the youths and helped bridle and saddle the horses.

When this was done the youths mounted and rode away.

They reached the Beverly Robinson house just as the sun was coming up, and, leaving the horses at the stable, they went to the house and Dick asked if General Washington was up.

"Yes," was the reply. "He is at breakfast."

The orderly then went and told General Washington that Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook were there, and the commander-in-chief at once ordered that plates be laid for them. This was done, and they were told to come in and take breakfast.

They were greeted pleasantly by the officers, and then the commander-in-chief asked Dick what he had to report.

Dick told him all, and when he told him about having seen Arnold, all listened with interest.

"He was a brave man and a dashing officer, but he has gone wrong," said General Washington; "and now, if we can possibly do so, we must get hold of him and hang him."

After breakfast General Washington called Dick to one side and asked him if he wished to have charge of the party that was to escort Mrs. Arnold down to New York City.

"I shall be pleased to do so, sir," was the reply.

"Very well; and the escort may as well be made up of your Liberty Boys."

"Will you send an orderly across the river to tell ten of the Liberty Boys to come over here, sir?"

"I will, Dick."

"Thank you."

Dick and Bob went upstairs and slept two hours. Then they were awakened and went downstairs to find the party ready to start.

There was a carriage for Mrs. Arnold, and a driver, and the twelve Liberty Boys were on horseback.

They set out at once, and the officers and soldiers waved their handkerchiefs to Mrs. Arnold as long as she was in sight, to show their good will toward her.

The party made its way steadily along, and late that evening they reached New York City.

They went at once to British headquarters, where they

were greeted by General Clinton and his staff, and by Arnold.

The meeting between husband and wife was affecting to say the least, and the sympathy of all for the woman was profound.

A little later Mrs. Arnold went to the apartments that had been given Arnold, he riding with her in the carriage, and when this was finished Dick and the Liberty Boys were given quarters in a large house near by.

They went over, on invitation, and spent an hour in the company of General Clinton and his staff. The British officers were greatly interested in the handsome, bronzed American youths. They had fought against the Liberty Boys on more than one battlefield, and they were glad of this opportunity to see the young fellows at close range, and when they were not so savage looking as in the heat of battle.

"You boys don't look dangerous," said one of the British officers, with a smile.

The Liberty Boys laughed, and said that they were not so very dangerous.

"We simply fight the best we know how for the great cause we love so well—the cause of liberty," said Dick. "We do our duty as best we can."

"No one can find any fault with you for doing that," was the reply.

When the youths went back to their quarters they talked the affair over, and said that the British officers were not such bad fellows after all."

"It's only when they are on the battlefield, actually engaged in fighting, that they are bad," said Dick; "and that is the way they look at us."

Next day the Liberty Boys returned to West Point and reported to Washington that they had escorted Mrs. Arnold safely to her husband, and that they had been treated splendidly by the British while in the city under the protection of the flag of truce.

Major Andre was executed as a spy October 2, 1780.

THE END.

The next number (163) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' TERRIBLE TUSSLE; or, FIGHTING TO A FINISH," by Harry Moore.

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